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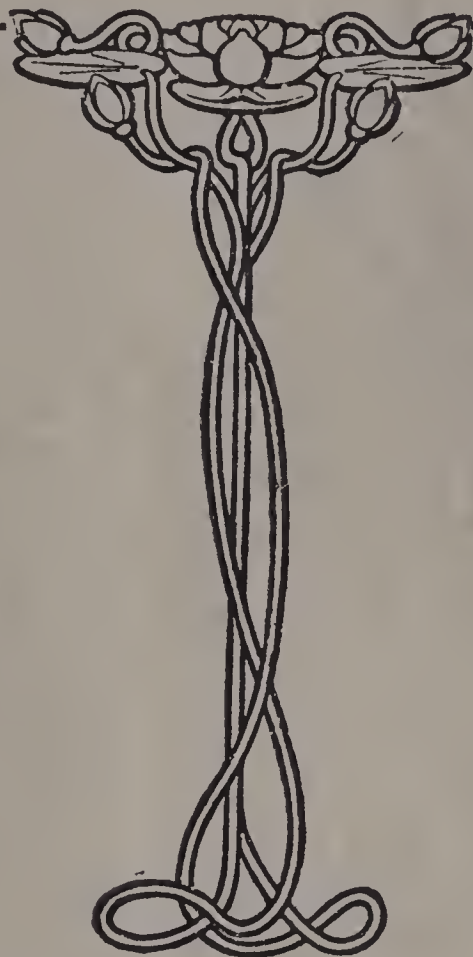
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MOSTLY COMICS



Mary Moncure Parker

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1930

MOSTLY COMICS

MOSTLY COMICS

Monologues, Readings and Poems

By

MARY MONCURE PARKER

*Author of "Funny Monologues and Poems,"
"Lively Monologues," etc.*



BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

1923

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THE CO-ED AND THE CAVE-MAN

A MONOLOGUE

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

DORIS, *the Co-Ed.*

CORINNE, *her friend.*

MR. RICHARD LANCASTER, *otherwise
known as "Dick," the Cave-Man.*

SCENE.—*The veranda of DORIS' home in the
early summer.*

DORIS *chatters.*

Let's curl up on this hammock, Corinne, and do hand me those chocolates before I expire. Oh, drop your tennis racquet any old where. The mater is up-stairs taking a snooze, and will not insist on order. Anyhow, we are going to the seashore next week, so things are rather at sixes and sevens here at home for the present. I am simply delirious about going. Why, you thought I didn't care to go? Whatever put such an idea into your head? Because of Dick? What will he do? I am sure I don't know what Mr. Richard Lancaster will do. His movements do not in any way interest me—not in the least. He is simply passé. That's all off. I can't see

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Dick for dust. Is it Hal Webster?—Worse and worse! Oh, my dear, don't dig back into ancient history! It was cons ago, ages upon top of ages that I saw Hal—'way last summer when we used to go canoeing in the river up at the Island House. And as for Dick—I mean Mr. Richard Lancaster—well, he was sort of interesting when he seemed a bit of a hero and was half-back on the college team. In lots of winning games? Oh, yes,—luck probably. He looked big and rough in his outfit and I will admit he is a fair looking person out of football togs. But one's taste does change so during the semesters from half-backs to actors or members of the glee club or dancers—whatever is necessary to keep up a constant thrillage; or this globe would simply be an impossible place to inhabit for a co-ed at least. And that's my world at present. In fact, I look with horror upon the time when I shall be ancient and tied for life to one person.

Of course, my parents seem fairly happy, but they are so sort of settled as it were. The mater did take a spell of dancing last winter, but Dad howled so when she pulled him out to the club dances that she gave up in despair. Why should elderly people want to jump around in that perfectly childish way? Why, mother's certainly—well, she doesn't tell her age, but it must be near forty—more or less. Of course, she seems spry and I love her to distraction and all that, but there is a time to

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quit and put away childish things. Is there something like that in the Bible or is it Shakespeare or someone? Who said it?

We had an adorable college year, Corinne, even considering mid-year exams and the last minute cramming and slow bells that wouldn't ring when one did not know the lesson and had to duck the Prof.'s eagle eye. I wish you had been with us instead of in that Seminary for the female of the species.

Once in a while Dad gets an awful grouch and vows that I know more about sorority rushes, and dormitory suppers, and fudge parties, and candy and flowers and proms, than I know about Socrates or Livy or Kant, but when Dad assumes that purely masculine attitude I am almost tempted to turn feminist and ooze knowledge every time I speak. Once I told him so and he said that would be a vast improvement because at present I oozed only slang and chatter about silly, asinine boys. Isn't it a scream that when a man gets older all young fellows in his eyes are idiots?

Wasn't it Susan B. Anthony who said, "Give me liberty or give me death"? Well, I'll give old Liberty the glad hand whenever I meet her. Dad sometimes imagines he's a regular slave-driver. I will admit as I look over the year my mind is somewhat kaleidoscopic and a jumble of rush parties, tea, sandwiches and cakes, dances, motor rides, psychology and math, but it is really a well-rounded experience that makes

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one a perfect woman, nobly planned as Longfellow said or was it Walt Whitman? He writes such cute things.

I am sure I never missed a psychology class. Our psych. Prof. was the best looking thing and young, but yet awfully wise-looking, positively owlish with those big eyes of his behind tortoise shelled specs. We dubbed him "Psyche" behind his back because he had such a soulful way of looking at one. Although when I read a sentence I was always in agony for fear he would ask me for an analysis of it, and what I made of it.

What, Corinne, you are simply dying to hear of Dick? My dear, I told you Mr. Richard Lancaster was out of my life. You heard we were engaged? Well, I hate to admit it, but we were for a while—secretly—it was much more romantic, but I gave him back his ring. Why? Corinne, you are so persistent. Pass me those chocolates. Don't eat them all, piggy, you will get obese, my dear, simply and plainly fat. You will never let up until I tell you? Well, in plain language Dick—er—Richard Lancaster is a brute—a tyrant—a regular cave-man. He wants to own your thoughts and tell you how to behave. Why, he's more domineering than Dad, and that's useless. You ought to hear Dad rave when my young brother and I let slip the latest slang. He says if he hears any more about ants' eyebrows, or angleworms' sunbonnets, or elephants' earmuffs, he'll

THE CO-ED AND THE CAVE-MAN

put me in a convent, and my small brother in a reform school. And now, Corinne, you see the awful restrictions that surround my life; although I must admit Dad forgets all about discipline only once in a while, and we talk as we please until he gets another spell, when I have to modify English as she is spoke.

What, Corinne? Didn't I wear Dick's frat pin for a while? Certainly, my dear. I see I am in for it. I gave it back just before last semester. One cannot be ruled with a rod of iron. This assumption of cave-man manners don't go with me.

You know Jimmy Wiggins? He sent those chocolates and he's the most marvelously divine dancer, one can forgive him if he isn't handsome, but he's a good dresser and awfully courteous. Dick said Jim's gray matter simply wasn't. Then I have been playing golf with Jerry Noble, and motoring with Phil Kayes. Phil belongs to the glee club and sings adorably. He has the most heavenly voice. Dick had something sarcastic to say about them all. He's studying law and I told him I hoped he'd be a judge as he was so clever about passing sentences on every chap he saw, and he said he hoped he would, as he knew he could send most of the mutts that hung around me to jail for that was where they'd wind up. Imagine such language, Corinne, and such an assumption of superiority over one's fellow men! I reminded him over and over again that our engagement

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was a secret and we were not to interfere with one another.

When we had the club opera last spring I had a part, and Jimmy Wiggins had to make love to me, and we had a darling dance, too, in the show that made a hit, and Dick grouched like a bear with a sore head. He even took a spell of criticizing me for changing my name from Dora to Doris. All the girls were doing it, and for bobbing my hair! I hope he's satisfied now no one bobs it any more. Didn't you change your name from Cora to Corinne? Corinne is so much more Frenchy and ducky. There is no class to Cora and Dora. I don't think Dick cared at all, but he was just jealous. The way Ada Reeves hangs around Dick—I mean Richard Lancaster, lately, is sickening, positively nauseating, but Ada is a mess; she is so sentimental. But, my dear, he—I mean Richard Lancaster—has passed out of my life, never to return, come what may.

Every day he drives by this house, but he never looks this way. He used to have a different girl with him each day, but now he drives alone, and I simply snub him unmercifully—never look his way. How do I know he is there? Why, just surmise, I suppose.

Another chocolate, honey. Thanks. You think I look pale and thin? Why, my dear, I am feeling fine and I play tennis and dance and go all the time, just to try to forget. Why, what am I saying? I must have been absent-

THE CO-ED AND THE CAVE-MAN

mind—yes—yes, I do admit Dick's awfully good looking really, but he is such a cave-man—no, a regular sheik.

Look, look, Corinne, there he comes down the street! No, don't look either; keep your head down. Of course it's Dick. Why, for pity's sake, he's at the walk. The nerve to park here! What? Coming in? Heavenly cats, and I've been playing tennis and look like the wreck of the Hesperus. Why should I care? I don't; not at all. I'll just stay right here and prove it.

Er—Good afternoon, Mr. Lancaster, to what do we owe this visit? You know Miss Ather-ton? I presumed so. You are going to sit down? Well, of course, I cannot prevent you from so doing. You are stronger than I—a weak woman.

Oh, don't go, Corinne! You must? I wish you would stay. No? Well, I'll expect you to-morrow, at ten? All right. By, by, dear. (*Walks up and down. Pauses.*) Er—what did you say, Mr. Lancaster? Nothing? If you expect to be a lawyer that's rather a poor recommendation. Your flow of language is meager. Er—what? Will I sit down? I've no objection—no, not beside you on the couch. I prefer to sit on this chair. Dick Lancaster, how dare you pull me to a seat beside you? (*Sits down.*) Dick, how dare you try to kiss me? Forgive you? Never. What are you doing? Putting the ring back on my finger.

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(Softens and wipes her eyes.) Oh, Dick, I've been so lonesome and—I do—love you—a little—a great deal?—Yes. And I don't care for anyone else?—No. I was going to a dance with Jimmy to-night. What? Will I break the engagement? Er—Yes, and go with you? Yes, Dick. We'll never, never quarrel again? No, we won't.

What, you don't care if I bob my hair, or call myself Doris or anything? And you haven't slept and you're crazy about me? Oh, Dick, you are a darling, too. You heard I was going to the seashore, and you couldn't stand it? Well, Dad doesn't want to go and neither do I now, and so between us I guess we can stay right here, maybe. What? You're wild about me? Oh, Dick, you are such a perfect dear! Oh, Dick, I've just thought there will be a moon to-night. Isn't this an adorable world?

MR. FINKELSTEIN SELLS A SUIT

A MONOLOGUE

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

MR. FINKELSTEIN, *and his* CUSTOMER.

SCENE.—*A Second-Hand Clothing Store.*

MR. FINKELSTEIN *elucidates on the value of the clothing he sells.*

Some clodings to-day? A nice Spring suit? I'll show you the very, most stylishest latest ting yet I got in suits—a nice check, black mit vite in between. Vot? You don't vant to blay checkers? Ah, you is vun of dem vaudville comics I bet, on de stage, vot?

Vell, here iss a nice gray—de latest in smoke gray. Von't show no dirt in de city smoke. It is de smoke shade, see? Spotted? No, no—dat iss de vay de light falls on it. Dirty? Yoi! Yoi! Dot vas cleaned. You don't expect a new suit entirely yet in de seconds hands blace. Dis is expensive goots—new, dot costs you fife times as much. Only svells vears dis kind goots.

I ge-payt much monies for dot suit, and I sell it reasonable. I don't keep no cheap skate blace for bums. Dis is for gents like vot you

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iss. I don't keep no half vay blace like Henry Rubels next door. De grefter!

Look even at dot dummy of his. You would laff yourself sick at de face uf dot dummy.

He speeded up and got dot dummy ven I put mine in. I got four, and he has only vun already. Such crowds as come in front mine store ven I put in my dummies. You could go vay out to de street to get by on de sidewalk. Heiny he rite away got yellus and de next day buy dat bum dummy vich vas about third hand.

You don't like dis gray suit no? Vell, I haf just de latest dark green in styles for dis Spring—like de Spring. You tink of flowers and birds and a young lady maybe, ven you see it. All de girls vill follow behint such a stylisher. Put it on—de nice goat. Oh, my! my! Ain't dot fine? Fits closer dan de vall paper yet, eh? Am I holding de back seam? No, no, for vy should I do dat?

See, turn around. Look at de back. Too loose? Oh yoi! yoi! Would you choke your heart vid de closeness of it? How much? Only twenty leedle dollars. I am giving it away, positivel. Vot? Too much? Haf a heart mit your body. I got a vife and fife small offsprings. Would you vish I bury my children from starvation alreddy?

All my suits look new, like just from the hants of the tailor. I haf a fine line clodings, hats, caps, shoes, ev'ryding first class.

Diss is a fine suit vot you can veer for years

MR. FINKELSTEIN SELLS A SUIT

and years. No! no! Dot ain't no moth hole. Vere I buy dese suits dey don't keep no moths. I don't buy no flivver suits. Mine iss limousines. Don't like it? Vy, dot's grand. Too much? No, I tell you dot's cheap. Look at de goots, like iron. I don't raise on de brice suits, though my expenses is ge-doubled too, lately. Last veek my vife came near dying mit de eppelplexy. She vays two hundret pounds. Though de doctor say she vas werra werra sick, ven I bring home second hand seal-fur coats dot looks like new, vy den she rewived—almost from Death's door.

“I must get vell and vear dot coat, in front mit Mrs. Heiny Rubels, and see how green she become mit yellusy,” she said.

Vell, I promised her de goat, tinkin' maybe she vould die, and de promise made her happier—ven beholdt! Yoi! Yoi! She got vell and she vore de goat last Sunday, and now I haff lost de brofit on de sales alretty. Such a bizness!

Vait. Vait! Don't go. If you don't like dot green suit, I haf yust de vun for you. It iss in de small pox.—But vot makes you run? Small pox? No! no! Not a disease. In de pox—de small pox on de shelf. Here it is, a nice stripe. You ain't no convict to wear stripes? Ha! Ha! Jokin' again alretty.

Vell, dese stripes dey run up and down. Dey make you look tall and grant. Vot you say? Notting to-day. You go by Heiny Rubels, and

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look? Mein gracious! Don't go dere, I pray you. He is like vun of dem Klugle Kulxers vot you read of, or vun of dem bandits. You neffer get away from him. As a frent, I beg you, I implore you, keep away from dot Heiny Rubels. I sell you dot gray suit, fifteen dollars. I am giffing it to you, making a bresent. I vill wrap it up rite away. No? Too much? Would you take de bret from de mouts of my babies? Too much?—Oh, yoi, yoi! Vot—seven fifty? Don't make me faint mit de hearts failure. All rite, all rite, seven fifty it iss. Take it, a grant suit, like for de Brince mit Vales or one of dem Vandergould boys. Here it iss wrepped up.

Tanks! Tanks! I am yust handing you dot suit, handing out my brofits like so much baper.

Good day. I vish you luck. Come arount again.

(A pause. After customer leaves stands rubbing his hands together.)

Seven dollars fifty cents! I got dot suit for one dollar twenty-five and I hope it holts togedder ven he vears it twice yet. Oy! Oy! Such a life! It vears a man out alretty. But I keep him away from Heiny Rubels—de Grefter!

THE FARMER LAD AND THE GYPSY BOLD

What ho! I will sing you a song to-day,
Of a farmer lad and a Gypsy bold.
For merry tricks doth yon Cupid play,
And the tale of love never grows old.

The farmer lad plowed the furrows deep,
As he sturdily trudged along;
While the Gypsy hurried a tryst to keep,
Singing a lilting song;

A lay of the road and the roving life,
With never a thought of care,
Away from the struggle of daily strife,
With Spring calling everywhere,

In flower and wind and budding leaf,
In the heart of the black-eyed maid,
Who tripped along with fairy step,
Bold and quite unafraid.

“Yo ho! You lad! Why work to-day,
Through all these lovely hours?
Come with me to the woods away,
We'll drink in the breath of the flowers;

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“ I’ll dance for you on a carpet of green,
Your pulses will keep in tune,
To the clicking ring of the tambourine,
All day, till the rise of the moon,

“ We’ll wander far to that happy land,
To the place where dreams come true,
You and I together, hand in hand,
Oh, boy with the eyes of blue.”

Like a bright-hued bird she perched on the
gate,
Smiling with lips so red,
As one who looks at her own true mate,
Yet never a word he said,

That farmer lad with the yellow hair,
’Neath his tan crept a deeper glow,
His heart strings tugged for the maiden fair,
Though his lagging feet feared to go.

“ Six feet two and you dare not stray,”
She laughed and her teeth gleamed white,
“ When fortune calls you must obey,
You are mine, oh my lad of might!

“ Let others toil when the Summer glows,
From dawn ’til the day is done;
The clinging bee hums to the dewy rose,
Naught matters if love is won.

FARMER LAD AND GYPSY BOLD

“Come follow me ’round the world, my sweet,
’Tis the way of a maid to be shy,”
The fetters fell from his lagging feet,
With a bound he caught her on high;

Away! Away! Down the Romany Road,
They two went, hand in hand,
From his shoulders fell the dragging load,
On the quest for the heart’s Dreamland.

What ho! I will sing you a song to-day,
Of the farmer who wed the Gypsy bold,
And wandered far o’er the hills away,
Love’s story will never grow old.

MIND READING AND MANDY

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

MANDY, LIZA JOHNSING, *her friend.*

SCENE.—MANDY'S *kitchen.*

MANDY *expresses herself.*

Has you evah heard 'bout dis heah min' readin' dey talks so much 'bout, Liza Johnsing? Dey is fokes what kin look right down into yo' min' an' tell what you is thinkin'. Dat's what my mistis done tole me an' since den I ain't looked her square in de eyes fer fear she'd read 'bout dat loose change she dropped on de pahlah flo' an' thought somebody'd picked her pocket in de cah. Dere ain't no use disturbin' her peace of min' wid doubts.

What you say, Liza? You don' believe in nothin' you can't see? Don' talk such foolishment. You's got a brain, ain't yo'? Well, has you evah saw it? Yo' done had a pain many times, but is yo' acquainted wid de pussonal appearance of a pain? Ev'body has done gone plum crazy 'bout min' readin'. But Ah's cured. Ah ain't gwine to fool wid dat stuff. Dat's hoodoo stuff sho's you is bawn.

Last week Henry Clay took me to 'a min' readin' show fur our honeymoon, kase we done

MIND READING AND MANDY

got married in de afternoon an' had a swell suppah an' den went to de show whar dey was one of dem Hoodoo Min' Puffessahs. Ah hadn't knowed Henry ver' long when he ax me to marry him an' Ah give mah consent.

Well, we went to de show, me an' Henry. Dis heah Puffessah advertize to read any brain in de room; he sho' was some loose talker. His words flowed lak de watah from one of dem fire hydrants when dey takes de cap off, or lak a river bustin' ovah a dam. He run round de stage an' shet up his eyes an' he say:

"Don' you feel dem thought currents flyin' roun'?" But Limkum Wheeler he call out he didn't feel no currents, nor raisins neithah hittin' him, an' de Puffessah got mad.

Then he call for somebody to wuk on, kase he wanted to read their min', an' Julius Cæsar Wood, he walk up but jes' as he got on de platform his mothah call out an' say dat Julius Cæsar didn't hab no min', not more'n a thimble full!—Kase his haid was a dice box an' he didn't know de name of wuk an' dat she'd been suppohtin' him fur all his life, evah since he done landed in de worl', an' shakin' de bones was all he knowed, so Julius Cæsar was so' as de dickens at sech talk, kase eve'body laughed an' he went an' sot down again.

Well, Liza, bimeby things begun to move lively an' dat Puffessah had folks singin' an' laughin' an' cryin' an' standin' on dey haid wid de hypnutizin' on de platform.

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You nevah seen sech a lot of foolishment actin' in yo' bawn days.

Ev'thin' was goin' along accordin' to arrangement, untwell dat Ann Eliza Clay come along.

Just den de Puffessah spotted me an' Henry settin' in de aujience an' he say:

"I kin read dat man's min', dat fine lookin' man wid de flowah in his buttonhole, settin' beside de beautiful lady with a large bokay in her han'," an' dat was my bridal bokay, Liza.

"De genleman stan' up please," he say to Henry, an' Henry stood up.

"Yo' is thinkin' of yo' lubbly bride," de Puffessah say.

"Right yo' is," say Henry. "Me an' me new wife wuz married dis afternoon."

All at once dah was a yell, an' Ann Eliza came chargin' at him, down de aisle, lak a fiah engine.

"Wat you doin' wid mah husband?" she say to me, tryin' to git at my hair, but Henry stood up front to guard me from dat tigress.

"Dat Puffessah's right," Henry say. "Dis is my new wife."

"Since when?" say Ann Eliza.

"Since dis afternoon," say Henry.

"Oh, you lef' me las' month, Henry Clay, an' you thought I was on de wes' side an' wouldn't heah of yo' carryin's on! Whar yo' divorcement papers?" she say.

"I ain't got 'em yet," he say. "Ah gits 'em when Ah gits my nex' month's salary. Mah

MIND READING AND MANDY

boss give me \$19.75 fur mah divorcement charges, but I seen a nice pahlah chair dat would be pretty in mah new flat an' Ah bought it fo' my new bride," say Henry.

"Oh, fo' yo' new bride," Ann Eliza say. "You ain't got no new bride. Onmarried you sho' ain't to me. You come right home wid me an' to-morrow you git dat pahlah chair, an' bring home to my 'partment whar it blongs," an' she yank him out of de place by his collah.

I didn't know dat man wa'n't deevoced, Liza, an' I dun dropped down on de flo' in a faint. Anyhow, I wa'n't contestin' nothin' wid dat woman, what weighs ovah two hundred poun's.

All of a sudden in de confusion, de lights went out, an' when somebody turn 'em up mos' all de watches an' de money in de crowd, includin' mah fifty dollahs what I'd saved up fo' de honeymoon was gone, an' so was de Puffessah an' a man what he hired to 'sist him.

He picked de pockets of de crowd an' dey made a vanishment from de place, sho' nuff.

Min' readin' is suttin' sho' de thing what I got plenty enuff of. An' I'se back in the ole place wukin'. In fac', I didn't give her no notice, kase marriage is somethin' lak Death, oncertain lak, and sudden, an' I didn't know how mine was gwine to tumminate.

I ain't got no new pahlah cheer, lettin' alone a new husban' an' I'se mostly short fifty puf-feckly good dollahs.

If anybody mentions min' readin' to me, dey's

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gwine to git a bump on der min's what won' go down in a hurry.

Bride am a word what the dictionary kin drop fur all of me, an' min' readin' am another word what am useless.

WHAT GEORGE THINKS OF CALORIES

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

GEORGE *and his friend*, FAT.

SCENE.—*Back porch of George's home.*

GEORGE *airs his views.*

The worst thing, Fat, was when Ma took up with the calleries and vittyminds. Ma never let me say vittles, but I don't see but that's as good a word as vittyminds, what sounds as coarse.

"Yo' Ma is a nice lady," Liza, our hired girl says, "but she sho' can git took up wid more of them newfangled fabs than any lady I ever-see." That's what Liza said to me, an' it's true.

"Oh, well, it's all right for you, Liza," I said, "because whatever Ma makes us do, don't make any difference to you—you eat and have what you want."

"You said it, boy," said Liza. "When Ah can't, Ah'll be a corpses. Dah's mighty little vittles in dem calikers an' vittlemine."

Last year Ma was crazy about the nature cure, Fat, and she made everybody eat raw cabbage an' carrots an' no meat, until Pa got sore an' said we'd better close the house an' rent a stable an' some box stalls.

Ma said that was the best thing, an' 'e

MOSTLY COMICS

wouldn't need a doctor if we lived simply, an' Pa said, "No, only a horse doctor."

Ev'ry mornin' I had to have a ice cold shower. I used to yell when the cold water touched me, and Pa said he'd lick me if I made such a noise, and Ma said I had to take the shower; wasn't that the caterpillar's crutches, Fat?

"Ev'ry day we're diggin' our graves with our teeth when we eat meat," Ma said. Pa said Ma could order a grave digger for him right away, if he didn't get more food, because he was near dead anyway.

"Don't think so much of your stummick," Ma said.

"I can't find mine," Pa said; "it's sunk out of sight, unless that's what's bumping against my spine. You go to tea fights an' bridge parties and get filled up," said Pa, "an' you're doin' your dietin' by proxy."

"No such thing," Ma said. "I'm true to my principles."

Then her principles switched, an' she changed to countin' calleries and vittyminds.

"You have made such a fuss," she said to Pa, "I have bought a little book. You may eat anything you want."

"Hurrah," says Pa.

"Hold on," says Ma, "an' hear to the end."

"I knew there was a catch in it," said Pa.

"It's like this," said Ma, "each person may eat what he wants, but not so much. A man may have, maybe, 2,500 calories."

WHAT GEORGE THINKS OF CALORIES

“That sounds fair,” Pa said.

“But a woman can only have 1,500 calories or so.”

“First time on record a man got ahead of a woman,” Pa put in, but Ma looked scornful at him.

“How many can a boy have, Ma?” I asked.

“About nine hundred,” Ma replied —

“Goody,” I hollered, but Gee Whiz! Nine hundred of them calleries wasn’t half enough to eat, the way Ma figured food.

Not only that, but Ma got mixed up with some kind of philosophy, Fat, preachin’ or somethin’, an’ she wanted me to go around sayin’ “Every day I’m growin’ better an’ better.” What kind of a nut would the fellers think me, and then I had to add “Every day I’m gettin’ happier an’ happier,” but I wasn’t. I said it before her, but when I got alone, I kept sayin’ over an’ over, “Every day I’m gettin’ sorer an’ sorer, an’ Every day I’m gettin’ darn madder an’ madder.”

I don’t know what I would have done if Liza hadn’t slipped doenums an’ pie to me behind Ma’s back.

Well, one day Ma went away for a coupla weeks, and Pa said, “Liza, there’s a wagon load of food on the way to the house, an’ it won’t be calleries an’ vittyminds.”

Say, believe me, we had chicken an’ punkin pie an’ hot rolls, until Pa an’ me most got sick, an’ near had to have a doctor.

We was lookin’ fine when Ma came back.

MOSTLY COMICS

“Nothin’ like callikers an’ vittyminds,” says Pa.

Ma said, “I changed my ideas a little,” she said.

“What, again,” roared Pa, though Pa was only kiddin’ for we’d had a letter from Aunt Mag where Ma was visitin’, an’ she told of all the parties an’ lunches that was give for Ma, an’ dinners an’ everything.

“You don’t mean you’re goin’ to change from countin’ calleries when you’re lookin’ so fine,” Pa said, makin’ believe he was shocked.

“We must stick, ’cause we can’t dig our graves with our teeth,” Pa said.

“I think,” says Ma, “we’ll dig a little—what’s the use of livin’ so strenuous? Let’s bury the calleries,” and that night we had a grand dinner, chicken an’ ice-cream an’ mince pie.

“Liza,” said Pa one day, “you must be a follower of Cooay—Every day your cookin’ gets better an’ better.”

“I don’t know nothin’ about your cooties,” said Liza, “but dat’s what I sure prides mah-self on, mah cookin’, an’ I’m sho’ glad I gets a chance to show off, an’ we don’t eat no more of dem calikers.”

I hope, Fat, Ma don’t get no more fads for a long while, ’til I’m grown, so we can eat.

Come on, pick up the bat an’ we’ll play ball, after I get a hand full of cookies for us. Liza’s cookies are sure the angleworm’s sunbonnet.

THE BELLHOP AND THE BOIGLER

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

THE BELLHOP.

THE CLERK.

THE BOIGLER.

SCENE.—*A family hotel.*

THE BELLHOP *has a story to tell.*

Before I was a bellhop, say, I t'ought brass buttons was somethin' swell; now if brass buttons was pebbles I wouldn't stoop to pick up a fist full. What wid runnin' up an' down stairs an' chasin' round wid ice-water to dames what tink tips is somethin' that's give in the races, it's a bum steer if you tink life in a uniform is a cinch. Don't let nobody string you dat de bellhop's bench is a place to rest.

The clerk gets sore if he sees you still more'n two minutes and asks you if you tink you'se a decoration or a lobby ornament. I ain't workin' in no Biltdorf but we got one of them fam'ly hotels that's up in the Eighties. 'Tain't too classy but some folks lives there year by year, and they's drummers what wouldn't go nowheres

MOSTLY COMICS

else on a bet though it's my personal and inside opinion they're nuts in the head for gettin' that kind of a hunch.

There wasn't much out-of-town-in-de-summer stuff about our dump, but it would pass as hotels go. There was the usual old dame what was long on coin and short on temper, and whose room was too cold or too hot or too damp or too dry though she's lived there ten years, and you couldn't chase her away wid a club. She could buy out de place but sticks to a room pretty near on de roof. It is the top room for hers and huggin' the filthy looker 'til the doller signs is pretty near rubbed off.

The fat old gent that wants a lots of waitin' on, sure he's dere but he tips liberal—which is more than you can say for the fresh thing that woiks down town and hangs over the desk chinnin' wid the clerk but she ain't such a worse looker, so they converses consider'ble.

The ancient old maid on the second floor is stuck on the clerk too, but when he lamps her first he does a vanishin' act and beats it into de private office.

Dere's de jolly drummer who tinks he's a scream an' allus greets you wid: "Well, General, how's the boy?" He not bein' in de army, I s'pose he tinks dat's a joke, but as he's loose wid de coin, as well as the mout, I laughs immoderate, though I has to tickle my sides to do it.

I ain't forgettin' to mention de blond widder

THE BELLHOP AND THE BOIGLER

wid de dog, who pays me to walk it up and down, but bein' a human bein' an' not a dog catcher I genrully ties de mutt up in a court off de kitchen until de time's up an' she ain't no wiser 'cause her room is in de front.

Kids we have around de place which is good enough as kids go, none of dem angels like dere mudders tinks dey is but not bein' so old I feel like pullin' off some of de rough stuff once in a while myself, though the kids what does that don't last long wid de management. Dere was one mamma's boy what knocked on de doors and rung bells but after mamma told the manager what a merry, playful child Robbie was de manager and the kid's mamma had woids, and Robbie an' his lovin' parient wasn't seen no more round de hotel. Of course, we has de flapper wot flirts wid everything, me included, an' wot jumps from bobbed hair an' short skirts to high combs an' trails an' veilin' stuff hangin' on de ground whenever de fashion changes. You kin tell de styles a year ahead by lookin' at her glad rags. She hits in high every minute, includin' de latest slang an' jazz step an' everyt'ing. She's de bee's ankle, dat young female. You'd oughter hear her mudder talk to her. "Flossie," she says, "wot would Grandmudder say at such talk?" But Flossie an' her Grandmudder don't discourse in de same langwidge no more'n if they was a Greek and a Svenska.

Say, here I am runnin' on about de boids in

MOSTLY COMICS

our hotel like a buzz waggin skiddin' on a wet street an' I started out to tell about de guy in "416."

De Lord Mayor of London, alias de head bellhop, who tinks he's runnin' de whole hotel, told me to get a walise from de check room and take it to "418," me bein' deep in one of dem dere mystery trillers in de poiper, readin' on de sly, an' tinkin' maybe I could get de hang of de story and git a thousand bucks or maybe at de least ten iron men what was offered for solving de same. Wid my mind on de guy in de green felt hat in de story, an' tinkin' he was de moiderer or maybe it was de woman wid de red wig—I say my mind bein' on dese tings I knocks absent-minded like on de door of No. "416" instead of "418." When dere wasn't no response for a minute, I knocks again an' says, "Here's de walise," an' presently de door opens cautious an' I was yanked in by de collar before I had time to bat an eyelash.

"What you peekin' through de keyhole for?" says de guy, a thin boid wid a black mustache, "I'll learn you to spy on me," an' just den his mustache whot he'd put on quick, fell off an' at one an' de same moment I got a knock on de beezer an' didn't know nothin', me goin' in a heap. When I come to somebody was shakin' me an' I was settin' on de floor in de hall wid de walise behind me an' de head bellhop an' a woman was standin' over me. "Wot's de matter wid you, 'drunk or crazy? Dis lady's been ringin'

THE BELLHOP AND THE BOIGLER

fur half an hour for her walise,” de boss bellhop was sayin’.

I gazed around dazed like—“De guy in ‘416’ give me a crack on de bean,” I says.

“He’d ought to have a medal,” says de head bellhop.

“Not de nice lookin’ man wid the black mustache?” asks the female woman. “The boy must be inebriated; it’s disgraceful.”

“No, I ain’t spifflicated, Loidy,” I says, “and dat boid ain’t got no mustache—it’s false.”

“Oh, he’s crazy,” screamed the loidy—movin’ away.

“I ain’t bugs nor nuts,” I says, strugglin’ to my feet.

“He goes to too many wild movies an’ reads too many crazy stories,” says the head bellhop.

“Dat guy in ‘416’ is a crook, a boigler,” I says. “When I went down I seen a bunch of jewels on de bed.”

“You’re fired,” said de head bellhop. “Give de lady her walise.”

All at once de female woman gave a shriek. “This isn’t mine. Where’s my bran’ new soot-case?” she kept repeatin’ like de chorus of a jazz song. De head bellhop knocks on de door of “416,” but it was locked an’ nobody dere.

“There’s no one there. The gentleman is out. You’re fired,” says the boss bellhop; “take your time and get out.”

I roamed around for two hours, bein’ afraid to face my mudder, an’ not darin’ to show my

MOSTLY COMICS

mug in de place where I hangs my hat because I ain't got one of dem movie mudders wot folds you in her arms an' says, "Never mind, my boy, it's all comin' out all right." My old loidy's liable to give me anodder whack fer losin' my job.

She's all right at dat, an' has always woiked hard an' took care of us when I wuz a kid an' six more of us, but she is got some temper an' a Jack Dempsey swipe, I'll tell the world. 'Tain't no reason anyhow 'cause a woman's a mudder she'd lose all her spunk an' act like them weepy white-haired dames wot's in the movies allus lookin' sad an' peaked an' sittin' on a porch.

Me mudder jawed somethin' fierce when I got home at last, but bein' as I got a knock on the coco, an' wid roamin' around an' everyting I keeled over in the house, why she got skairt an' put me to bed.

But I'm lingerin' too long. I'll make de rest snappy. De next day de head bellhop an' a cop an' a little fat sheeny come to de house an' me mudder was for clearin' out de bunch wid a rollin' pin, tinkin' I wuz goin' to jail, but I was took to identify de smooth-faced guy who was a boigler an' had stole jewelry from a big firm in anudder part of town. He tinks I was spyin' on him so he gives me de love tap an' changed walises an' skips down de fire escape, it bein' dark.

It was troo me he got caught for leavin' a ring an' part of a letter in de walise he left, by

THE BELLHOP AND THE BOIGLER

mistake, in his rush to do a marathon from our burg in a waitin' auto wot met him an' took him to a station out in de limits where he wuz to ketch a train but got ketched instead.

On account of its bein' troo me dey nabbed him, de Judge decided I was to have de reward—five hundred beans. I near fainted. De Jew, de sheeny jeweler, wanted to beat me down to two hundred and fifty dollars, me bein' a kid, an' talked all de way to de station like a steam-engine almost cryin'; but fur onct de head bellhop was wid me, an' give me a punch on de quiet to hold out, anyhow de Judge give me de money. An' we got de five hundred.

Me pitcher was in de poiper, an' Ma an' de neighbors bought out near de whole edition. I got me job back on de mourners' bench at the hotel.

Me mudder has a strong arm an' a look in her eye so she cops two hundred and fifty an' buys a new dress, an' some clothes fur de kids, puttin' de rest in de bank, but I guess it's all right fur she put it in fur me. Anyhow, she took it.

All jobs is woik, an' in de course of time I may get to be de head bellhop an' get my head swole sure enuff widdout a wallop. Dis position is me mudder's idea of a fine job. Let her dream, but maybe I'll learn to be a deteckatif an' git rewards.

THE UNTAMED

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

WARCA-ZIWIN, *the Sunflower,*
an Indian maiden.

HARAKA WAMBDI, *a young*
Indian brave.

WARCA-ZIWIN *speaks.*

I, Warca-Ziwin—Indian maiden,
Called by my people, The Sunflower,
Stood on the edge of a great rock,
The great rock that juts from the mountain;
Below raged the swift flowing river,
Above reached the peaks of Waukeeyan—
Waukeeyan, the god of the thunder,
Who pierces the earth with an arrow.
Around me were the wind spirits,
Far away curled the smoke of our camp fires.
Fifteen snows on the shadow hills distant
Have come and passed into oblivion
Since I, a pappoose, small and round-faced,
Hung from my mother's broad shoulders,
Or lay 'mongst the trees' leafy branches,
Crooned to rest by the murmuring breezes
Where the bird-people sang to their nestlings.
As I stood there in deep meditation
The days seemed to pass swiftly by me.

THE UNTAMED

That day when I first saw my loved one,
Haraka-Wambdi, the warrior,
He came from the hunt as I saw him,
The young brave, like a bronze carven image,
Across his horse were the trophies of valor.
Like a conqueror came he triumphant,
Young, slim, with the lithe splendid body
As a spirit placed into the clay mold,
And sent to earth by the Breath Master.
At the door of the wigwam I waited,
His eyes caught my own and I trembled
With joy and a wondrous contentment.
He was not as are other vain chieftains,
Ashamed of the love of a woman,
Though in secret in days that came after
We stole away into the forest.
In secret we whispered our story,
For a warrior must not love like a woman,
And I feared lest the others might chide him.
Haraka-Wambdi adored me;
Our meetings were secret and sacred.
We crept through the long, damp, swamp
grasses,
And sat at the edge of the river,
When the sun hung low at the sky line,
Or the moon rode high in the heavens,
When dew sparkled over the woodland
As the rosy young day the world wakened.
The story we learned of wood-people,
Of the squirrel, the chipmunk, and beaver,
Hand in hand through the forest we wandered.
Like a deer in my slip of brown buckskin,

MOSTLY COMICS

My glossy braids over my shoulder,
Sometimes I ran swiftly before him,
Fleeter of foot, he would catch me,
Winding his bright blanket round me,
And clasping me close to his bosom.
When called to the chase with the others,
Around his neck, my charm held him safely,
A charm made from skin of the rattler.
All too swiftly passed that gay summer,
The summer before my sad school days,
When came a man from the mission,
To teach us the ways of the Pale Face.
I went with him back to the mission,
For I was sent to be taught for my people,
That on my return I might teach them,
The books and the ways of the white man.
I left the wigwam for houses of plaster,
Changed my bead work, for long seams of cotton.

This was the wish of my father,
Grown old and weary of striving
To push back the oncoming pale face
Who crowded our race toward the Westlands.
“Perchance we may learn to combat them
If our youths know their secrets of progress.”
I went but my heart was not in it.
My free limbs felt shackled in fetters.
Home I came when my father lay dying,
Serene, his spirit passed over the border.
May my soul be purged from the lying
For I whispered of peace for our people,
Of the kindness and love of the pale face,

THE UNTAMED

Who have crowded us into small spaces,
And taken the lands that were ours.
As I stood on the edge of the great rock,
These visions passed before me like shadows,
Then came he, Haraka-Wambdi,
“So here is Sunflower, the traitor,”
He said and his bright eyes were blazing,
“The sham who follows the pale face,
And prays to the God of the White Man,
False to the mother who bore her,
False to me, her once chosen lover.
Yet you are mine, mine only, my sunflower.
No other shall have thee and wed thee.
A thrust of the knife and together
We plunge below into the river.
Back into the land of the spirits,
I swear to the Absolute Power.”
Then he seized me high on his shoulder,
As though lifting a sacrifice offering,
But I laughed aloud toward the Heaven;
“I fear not death with my warrior,
For my soul is free and untrammelled.
No books of the pale face shall tame me,
See, I wear my slip of brown buckskin,
My headdress and moccasins beaded,
I still am an Indian Maiden.
My heart beats for my brave, stalwart warrior.”
Thus I spoke to Haraka, my strong one,
Fleet of foot he ran over the moorland,
Holding me high on his shoulder.
Toward the West and a future together,

MOSTLY COMICS

I—Warca-Ziwin, the Sunflower,
And my lover, my brave Indian warrior,
My heart sang as birds carol sweetly,
Where day dawns beyond over the mountain.
Untamed we rushed toward the Westlands,
Untamed as creatures unconquered!

MAGGIE McCARTHY AND THE KIDS

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

MAGGIE McCARTHY.

MARY O'SULLIVAN, *her friend.*

SCENE.—MAGGIE'S *kitchen.*

MAGGIE *extemporizes on Kids.*

Begorry! If any wan wants to demean thimsilf workin' where they's childer, let 'em go ahead. As fer me, I know when to quit, an' plenty is enough. You see it's loike this, Mary O'Sullivan, I'm tellin' you, but I ain't sayin' nothin' to Biddy, thot is I wouldn't if I saw her, her bein' livin' out of town fer four years since last summer. She used to say childer was the workin' girls' curse, or somethin' like that, an' she wouldn't take a place where they had 'em.

I said to her the world would be a bum enough place widdout childer in it, but she says "Shore the world's all right, that's a big place, but wait till you try workin' in a six-room flat for folks that has four kids. Just wait!"

"If the Hivinly Powers hadn't intinded fur kids to be in the world," says I, "they wouldn't be here," an' she says, "Far be it from me to criticise Hivin, but I don't care to be earnin'

MOSTLY COMICS

me board an' keep playin' nurse maid an' cook at the same time."

But I was sot in me ways, an' I took the place which I'm tellin' ye about, fur which may I be forgiven fur me foolishness.

To hear the Missus talk whin she ingaged me, thim childer was all sproutin' wings. The baby niver cried, an' the rist was thot lovin' they was loike bees in a hive, wid the honey of 'em.

"Here's your nice room," says she to me, whin I come in for keeps after engagin' wid her.

"Does it open into this closet?" I says.

"There ain't no closet," says she, "this is the room and a fine room it is too," she says.

"Where's the windy?" I asks.

"Up there," she answers, pointin' to a bit of an openin' near the ceilin', that showed a wonderful piece of a brick wall from where I stood.

"That won't nade bars to kape me from escapin'," I says. "There must be a fine view fur a mountin' climber from it," I says, sarcastic, but she changed the subject.

"I lave you to unpack your things," says she, and left me in the little two by four place she called a slapin' room. I sot on the bed and belave me, the springs must have been lift out of the wires, fur I'd never git bounced out of bed turnin' over, although I might git callouses.

"Will," says I to mesilf, "I'll give her a tryout. There's no use gittin' discouraged immejut."

Whin I was interduced to the kids, I seen there

MAGGIE McCARTHY AND THE KIDS

was a b'y fourteen. The Saints deliver me from livin' in a household wid a b'y fourteen. He's nayther fit to kill nor to cure.

"Hello, Hulda," says he.

"Me name ain't Hulda," says I.

"Ain't you a Svenska?" he asks, grinnin'.

"I ain't thot," I snaps.

"Or a Polack," he asks agin.

"Mind your business," I says, sore enough, "an' git out of me kitchen."

"Since when was it your kitchen? I'll go when I get a donut. Come on, Fat an' Sliver," an' he brought in two hoboes like himself.

"Thim donuts is fur dinner," I says.

"Not these three," he answers, grabbin' thim out of a bag.

"Git out of here, you an' your fat frind, tredin' dirt in me kitchen," I hollers at thim.

"Bye bye," says the fourteen-year-old b'y.

"Bye bye, Mary Picklefoot. You're the pig's knuckles, and whin do you make your next pitcher?" he says, but I takes the broom and thin they skidoos.

Thin two little girls come in from school. They musta been about sivin an' eight, an' they stood in the dure an' giggled an' whispered, an' whin I spoke to thim, giggled some more.

"Say, fer the luv of Mike, what's the joke? Do you think I'm an ixhibition? Come on in," I says, gittin' mad.

They ran by me gigglin' and thin came back.

"Where's Ma?" they asked.

MOSTLY COMICS

"She wint our fer a while."

"I bet she's wint to the club," says wan.

"Or to play bridge," says the other.

"Hush, you'll wake the baby an' your Ma said he'd slape till she come back."

"Oh, but it won't. Wait till you hear it cry! It just screams and screams," says the older wan.

"We want somethin' to eat," says the younger wan.

"Don't touch thim donuts. They're fur dinner," I says, puttin' the bag high up on the shilf.

"Well, a little piece of bread an' butter thin," they both says, nearly together.

"Here's some bread, an' clear out," I says.

"Goody. Goody!" says the bigger wan.
"Baby's asleep an' I won't have to do my practicin'."

"Let's go down an' see Belle," said the little wan.

"Sure," says I, "go to see Belle," not carin' who Belle was, only anythin' to git rid of thim.

"Did Tommy have a donut?" says the big wan. "'Cause if he did I'm goin' to have one too."

"So'm I," says the little wan.

"If Tommy's the young divil wid the two frinds, he did," I answers.

"Oh, I'll tell Mamma you called Tommy names," says the little wan.

"Go along," I says, "or there'll be more

MAGGIE McCARTHY AND THE KIDS

than names. 'Twill be murder," and I reached for the mop.

They run out callin', "Cross Patch, draw the latch. Cross Patch, draw the latch."

Belave me, I'd have to go to confission wid the thoughts of me toward the whole bunch jist thin.

Thin who should come in but the grocery b'y poundin' at the door.

"Look out," I yells at him. "Don't you dare walk on my clane floor."

"Say," says he, "put on the soft pedal. I've got a fierce timper meself. Don't you see I have rid hair."

"That's so, Red Top," says I. "The Lord wasn't very kind to you whin he give you red hair, you bein' so ill favored otherwise. Git," and he got.

Thin the ice man came, an' he wanted to chin a bit—bein' an Irishman, I was more lanient wid him an' me an' the ice man had some frinds each knew an' was gittin' sociable loike, whin the baby screamed, an' I had a time quietin' him whin the department store man come, wid par-sels which didn't amount to much, me lookin' into the hull of thim, and after I had drove away a peddler an' a beggar or two, I was wore out whin hersilf come home. An' I had to git dinner.

Thot was an awful monotonous place, not thot there wasn't noise enough an' confusion a plinty, but noise gits monotonous whin it's loike

MOSTLY COMICS

wan of thim continuous performances at the movies an' if you stayed over an' over troo thim, you'd about go crazy. So it was at thot place, continuous.

The first thing in the mornin' after briakfast an' himsilf was gone an' thim kids at school, hersilf gits to the 'phone an' thin such a rag chewin'. It was something like this. (*Mimics.*) "Yes, Gert, it's Lill. Yes—Wore out—up late—uh-huh—a spiffy new vilvit—princiss an' satin pumps. No—not this afternoon—dancin' school for the childer—well—perhaps I can arrange it." An' she looks around cautious, me knowin' she was movin' to ask me to stay in, but I says to mesilf—nothin' doin' old girl. Then she goes on. "Who, Carrie did you say?—She makes me tired. That isn't real Rooshian sable—I should say not. She couldn't afford it—No—lost money—I heard so—Yeah—meet you for tea—that is—er—well, lots to tell you—See if I can get away—Yeah—Bye bye."

Thin she'd call the grocery an' the dress-maker. Mr. Idison or Mr. Bell, or whoiver invinted the tiliphone had her lifelong gratitood.

Sometimes she got into a fight wid de operator or some other dame on the line, and I bit the telephone girl hopes there's no 'phones in Hivin.

And the cuteness of her, Mary O'Sullivan, tryin' to bluff me whin she wants to kape a date for tay wid Gert, as she calls her, sayin' she

MAGGIE McCARTHY AND THE KIDS

had a sick frind at the hospital, her not knowin' I'm listnin' behint the dure all the time whin she talks at the 'phone.

Well, things goes along so-so for a wake or two, and thin her mother comes from Tolado or Pontiak or some place, to visit her, an' thin we had one of thim grand barrages or machane gun attacks or whatever they call thim in the army. She tried to run the whole house, me included, but I quits cold. Says I, the kids is bad enough, an' I tould the ould hin to kape out of me kitchen an' she an' I near come to blows.

She says I was makin' faces at her an' I says she didn't have to make faces at me, she havin' wan of thim kind like a comic valentine, anyway.

So I quit, an' now I'm livin' wid deaf mutes who talks on their fingers an' laves instructions in writin' an' Joe's the polaceman on this bate an' drops in wanst in a while.

Oh, must you go, Mary O'Sullivan? I'll jist walk out a bit wid you. It's some toime before dinner an' the park is nice this toime of the year. Wait till I git me hat—ain't this air foine?—the Spring is here wid the grandness of it all.

Fur the luv of Mike, spake of Angels, here comes Biddy, wheelin' a baby carriage. She must have changed her mind about kids. Well, Biddy, me darlin', I thought you was livin' miles away.

Back agin? Married? An' this is your kid? An' you ravin' against childer, always!

MOSTLY COMICS

This wan is different? That's what they all say. Will wonders nivir sase?

For me fur the prisint, kids is just kids, an' the manin' is not complimentary.

THE CONQUEST

A MONOLOGUE OF THE DAYS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

AGNES, *a young girl, Lord Radcliffe's niece.*

WALTER, *a lad of fourteen, Lord Radcliffe's nephew.*

DIANA, *the greyhound.*

HASSAN, *the sparrow-hawk used in hunting.*

SCENE.—*The Grounds of the Castle of Lord Radcliffe.*

AGNES, *a lively young girl, talks.*

Down, down, Diana! I like thee much but thou must not soil my new gown. See, Hassan, my sparrow-hawk is jealous. He would peck at thee. There, there, Hassan. This is Diana, my greyhound. She will not hurt thee. She is thy good friend, I am sure, and will not usurp thy place in the hunt for she likes not hunting and such rough sports. Ah, here comes my

[NOTE. *The costume of Agnes is a full gathered skirt of white or colored satin, reaching almost to the floor, tight waist, full sleeves, slashed with a contrasting color set in the slashes; a pretty head dress, after the manner of Marie Stuart, and a wide ruff about the neck. Of course, the costume is optional.*]

MOSTLY COMICS

brother, Walter. See how quickly she races to meet him.

Why, Walter, lad, thou art at fever heat with thy racing and romping about. Thou wilt be ill, and then would I be sad indeed without my little companion. Let us have no more of illness. Hassan has been moping all day on his perch in the mews and so I brought him hither. See how he ruffles his feathers. He likes not Diana's affection for me.

Ah, Hassan (*Holds out her arm and speaks as though to the bird perched on her wrist.*) as miserable as thou art, I would I were in thy place. (*Wipes her eyes.*) Yes, Walter, dear, I am very sad. We will place Hassan upon this perch I brought thither. Then I will tell thee what hath sorely grieved and angered me. (*Makes a move as though placing the bird on the perch.*)

Sit down beside me on this garden seat. Though thou art but a child thou hast been my sweet companion and I will tell thee the cause of my sadness. (*She sits down.*) Yes, dearest, I know thou didst think I was as happy as the birds that sing the livelong day. So was I until but a fortnight hence. (*Speaks angrily, tapping her foot.*) To be portioned off like a bit of merchandise to a man one never saw, and that, too, a great awkward Scottish creature! 'Tis beyond bearing! (*Wipes her eyes.*)

Who hath dared do this? Thou wilt defend me? Ah, dearest; I know thou art brave and

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yet thou art not a man grown though even as a boy I know thy prowess and fearlessness. Wert thou twice thy years thou couldst do naught in this matter. 'Tis my uncle's will and thou knowest the Radcliffe will and pride. Thou and I are but clay in his hands. He is kind in all but this, but he is determined I shall wed that loutish Archie MacDonald, the nephew and heir of Lord Lambourne, whose estate lies next to ours. A pretty pass that I must wed to join these two estates else will my uncle disinherit me. For this I care not for myself but for thee. He hath declared that thou, too, shall not inherit aught, if I am stubborn as he calls it.

Oh, I know what thou wouldst say—do not mind thee—but thou art young and when older grown should not be deprived of thy lawful rights. What say you? Is this Archie MacDonald very ugly? How should I know—I have never seen him! But I can guess just how he looks. Is not Lord Lambourne a homely old man, with red hair mixed with gray, and a stubbly beard, and is not Archie MacDonald his nephew? What more need you to make a picture? He is young and perchance not bearded but I feel sure he is a clownish creature.

Let me begin at the beginning. Thou knowest Uncle and I have but recently returned from London Town whence we went to the fête day of the Queen. Would that highwaymen had run away with me on the rough and tedious

MOSTLY COMICS

roads that lead thither! Would that there had been no link boys to guide us through the crooked narrow streets or that we had been waylaid—would—but what use my vain regrets? I will speak of more cheerful things. I have not told thee of the wide hall and the great fireplace, of the tapestries and wondrous armor of Sir Hugh and Lady Judith Martingale and the splendid feast they prepared for us. “Light of my eyes” she called me, for she is a lady of such a kindly way and smile, thou wouldst love her, Walter dear.

I have not told thee of the stir in London Town—of the great procession and the crowds in the streets, the travelling showmen, burghers, gentlemen in velvets, feathers and chains of gold and silver, of the sea of faces peering from the casements and balconies and the excitement in the streets. How I loved the crowds and the noise and I insisted upon mingling with them, that was half the sport, so Lady Martingale, Sir Hugh and our uncle as well as a serving man went with me.

Men stood in front of the shops, calling their wares, and I wanted to make a purchase at every corner. Such a wondrous procession, Walter dear, (*Rises excitedly.*) tall yeomen on foot carrying halberds, soldiers on horseback with glittering spears, courtiers gay in jewels and velvet, beautiful dames splendid as the sun and oh, in the midst the Queen in a gorgeous gown and velvet cloak much bejeweled, on a horse of

THE CONQUEST

magnificent proportions. She is not pretty yet she hath a queenly air. I told Lady Judith she herself was far prettier than the Queen, but she clapped her hand about my mouth and said laughingly, "Breathe not such treason." Then all of a sudden, Walter dear, to my dismay I found myself quite separated from Lady Judith, pinned and hemmed in by the crowd. Running hither and thither in my fear, I turned into a close, narrow street that seemed somewhat empty, and from an inn near by came the sound of carousal. Uncertain what to do, I stood, when three swaggering roysterers came out of the inn and they suddenly blocked my way. One pulled aside the hood of my cape which I had drawn about my face, another made a low bow and said, "Marry, a lovely one, I vow. What kindly zephyr hath wafted thee to my arms, my sweet?"

Trying to assume a bold air, though my heart was beating wildly, I cried, "Unhand me, sirrah! For shame to attack a helpless maiden! Come no nearer." And I tried to look brave like this. (*Assumes an attitude.*) The third one made as though to put his arm about me, but I jumped to one side. "Ho! Ho! A haughty wench, with the airs of a court dame," he said, mockingly. "If thou art so grand a maiden why art thou running about alone? Where is thy protector?"

"Here," cried a voice behind me, and Walter, as I live, before the scoundrel had time to turn

MOSTLY COMICS

he was hurled in a heap against the doorway. "Now, knaves, I am ready for you, singly or all together," cried the same voice. "Touch but a hair of this maiden's head and I'll run you through like three roasts on a spit." Oh, Walter, lad, 'twas a man, young, big and brave, and how he fought and ousted the three ruffians one by one until they slunk away, one wounded and the others carrying him to the inn!

Then did my rescuer offer me his arm. I was trembling like a leaf but I glanced at him shyly. Dearest brother, he was young with a ruddy skin and a crop of sandy curls and he was so big and brave. When I found my tongue, I told him about my friends and of how I had come to London Town with my uncle and just then we ran into Lady Judith's serving man, who said they had all scattered in different directions to seek me and that Lord Radcliffe, my uncle, and the rest were in much concern about me. (*Sits down upon the bench.*)

Though I asked my brave gallant to come with me and meet my uncle, he said as I now was in safe hands he would take his departure and call in proper season if I would so graciously permit. His bow was low and sweeping, and dearest brother, I have not been able to think of any one since then but my brave knight. Alas, I am unfortunate, indeed, to meet so sweet a gentleman and all too late. (*Wipes her eyes.*)

This is my story, dearest brother, and 'tis why I am sad. My heart hath turned to my

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brave young rescuer and yet must I be tied to an awkward creature. I know full well how he looks, this Archie MacDonald, for is not Lord Lambourne, his uncle, big and ugly with a gruff manner that would frighten one almost into a faint? To-day they come to visit my uncle, and to formally ask my hand in marriage—this Scotchman and his uncle. 'Tis little wonder my heart is heavy.

Hark! 'There is the sound of horses' hoofs. They are coming. Come, let us run into the castle. The time when I meet this creature will be all too soon. (*Moves as though to enter the castle doors.*) Nay, nay, Walter, I will not peep through the casement. I shall see him soon enough. What say you? A young, handsome man rides beside Lord Lambourne? Stalwart and noble? Nay, it cannot be true. Wait, Walter, let me look. (*Speaks excitedly.*) He hath removed his plumed hat and he hath a crop of sandy curls. Walter, dearest brother, can I believe mine eyes? (*Speaks excitedly.*) It is—It is he! My rescuer!—Can this really, truly be? It is indeed my brave knight of London Town! Sh—Walter! Away from this window! Our uncle enters. (*Assumes a show of demure calmness.*)

What sayest thou, Uncle dearest? Lord Lambourne and his nephew, Archie MacDonald, await below? What sayest thou? I must bend to thy will? Thou wilt have no airs? Nor silly pouting? (*Makes a curtsy.*) Nay, Uncle,

MOSTLY COMICS

I have reconsidered since thou didst speak to me a fortnight since. I am ready to obey thee and marry Archie MacDonald, for, dear Uncle, I am sure thou knowest best. (*Curtseys again.*)

THE CHORUS GIRL SAYS SOMETHING

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

THE CHORUS GIRL.

HER FRIEND.

SCENE.—*The dressing room back of the stage.*

THE CHORUS GIRL *grouches*.

It gives me a pain all this here bunk about chorus girls. Anybody'd think the minute you hook up with a measly chorus you was hittin' about 75 per hour in one of them auto racers all the time.

Where's all them champagne baths and drinks of melted pearls and livin' at the Commodore? Me and Effie Moran (only her stage name is Dimples Gray—wouldn't that get your nanny?)—we lives so far from the Biltmore and them high-toned dumps that it would take up half a day to get to 'em from our little two by four room up near the roof in an old timer three story and basement.

We washes out our stockings and ninety-eight cent silk shirts in a bowl and eats at a Greek palace with counter stools or a Ching Chop Suey joint or else when the old fairy what condescends to rent us a room (say, her face ought to get her a job without grease paint in

MOSTLY COMICS

one of them sunshine comics) ain't around, we smuggles in a gas plate and makes coffee and fries eggs.

This here pipe dream about stage door Johnnies, too, where do they get all that stuff? A few half-baked clerks or college chumps, or an old century plant with a head like a billiard ball, who thinks he's still in rompers runnin' round with a kiddie kar, is all anybody ever sees near the stage door—and not near, neither, because our door man is about six feet and weighs three hundred.

I ain't such a bad looker and neither is Effie and she's got honest to goodness dimples, but the men ain't standin' in line to treat us jazz babies, or to play sheik and grab us onto a horse and kidnap us like what's doin' in the movies. Ain't it queer how the people fall fur the hero gettin' away from a whole army with pistols and swords and runnin' up a mountain or swimmin' a ocean and savin' a girl to be his bride and do his washin' and mend his socks?

They always stop the pitcher at the weddin' before the family fightin' begins. You see 'em embracin' in the moonlight an' sunlight and in the middle of a snowstorm, and everybody sits up thrilled like, though anybody knows there ain't no men like that in real life. They ain't near so affectionate nor near so strong.

Dimples says I'm soured on life at nineteen. That's the age I give the manager, but I'm twenty-three, which is a small lie compared with

THE CHORUS GIRL SAYS SOMETHING

some in our chorus, who says they is twenty-five and will never see thirty-five again.

But no woman can tell the truth when it comes to age if they can get by and be small and thin and you can't blame 'em when they have a livin' to make and maybe have two or three kids to support, bein' hooked up in the holy bonds of matrimony with a dumbell who lets 'em earn the daily bread.

Me and Dimples ain't in a broadway show but in a jazz musical revue what's goin' so well they're takin' two shows on the road; but thank heavens we're with the main show and stayin' right here in the big burg.

But these here fairy tales about chorus girls—say we have to get to the theatre about an hour before the show and we have two shows a day and in the dressin' rooms we sew, waitin' for our turn which closes the bill and when it's goin' on we're so busy changin' between songs and lines we can't get a breath.

It's workin' like bein' a clerk or a stenog, and if you make a Broadway show it's harder work. Them swell clothes that's in the show belongs to the manager and ain't no more the show girls' than them glad rags the haughty dames wear in the stores what's models, belongs to them.

I came from the country because I got sick of pigs and cows and work and all the longin' they have in the movies for the apple blossoms and the hired man what looks like a gentleman clothes model, only in overalls and plays the

MOSTLY COMICS

harmonicum, is all mush, too. Our hired man was a sight any time and in the winter let his whiskers grow 'til they looked like a haystack.

Whenever I see a movie with a girl strugglin' home through the snow, doin' the weeps, I laughs myself sick because our house would freeze you stiff when it snowed and blowed and even my little old room here is fairly comfortable.

When I landed in town I got a job as a waitress but as I say I got hooked up with a show, bein' not so short on good looks, if I do say it as shouldn't, through Dimples who used to eat at our place, and we took to each other fine. One of the dames in our show, who hates herself like a baby hates his bottle, was airin' her views and tellin' her conquests and how she worked meals off of easy marks by pickin' out some guy in the audience and smilin' at him. I didn't tell nobody, but tried her game one day only it was when I had bumped into a door in the dressin' room and knocked out a tooth, but I had to go on and hot water kept my lip from swellin'. You never get let off anyhow unless you're dead and can't stand up. When I was dancin' I forgot about the tooth, and all at once I remembered the dame's advice, and smiled at a bird I picked out and he smiled back. We got real chummy about the end of the show, and sure enough he was waitin' at the corner of the alley. I smiled again just for the fun of the thing. He didn't look like much of a catch, but

THE CHORUS GIRL SAYS SOMETHING

maybe was good for a swell feed, and I was short that week.

"I hope you don't think I'm fresh, but would you mind having a bite with me?" he says. I says, "Nothin' is the matter with my appetite," seein' a real meal in view. Where do you think he took me? To a waffle shop, and we had waffles and coffee. He was the devilish thing—a regular little cut-up. Then he give me his card, and it said:

"WARREN MELROSE,
DENTIST.

Teeth extracted without pain. All
kinds of dental work at reasonable
rates. False Teeth \$5 a set."

He was one of them advertising teeth pullers.

"Say, you're a real sport, ain't you?" I says, sarcastic.

"I saw your tooth was out, and I thought you might like a good job cheap," he says.

"You're a busy little worker," I says, "and you sure can spend your loose cash for feed," I says, lookin' at the waffles. "Don't give the waiter more'n half a dollar," I adds, but it passed clear over him like a airship over a skyscraper.

The next stage door Johnny I struck was when I slipped on a bangle that fell off one of the girls' skirts, and was jawed somethin' scandalous by the manager after the show, and near lost my job. That kept me a little late and

made me so sore inside I forgot my sprain, which was nothin' much, but when I went out of the stage door there was a mutt standin' there, in a light belted coat, and wearin' one of them Charlie Chapman mustaches.

"Who are you?" I asks, "the new comedian?"

"Pardon me," he says, liftin' his hat, "I saw your unfortunate accident, and am so sorry."

"'Tain't hurtin' you," I says; "what are you doin' here? I didn't smile at you."

"Now, girlye," he began ——

"Don't girlye me," I says, "unhand me," but he really never touched me.

"You're about as friendly as a polar bear," he says, grinning kind of ape-like.

"I want to go home and nurse my ankle," I says, "and I got a regular Jack Dempsey reach and I ain't hungry for waffles," I adds, "skip."

"How about ham and eggs?" he asks, "and a piece of pie, right across the street at the Greek joint?"

"Them classy places makes me nervous," I sneers, "with the grand service, and swell waiters and full orchestra and everything. Run right along, and put your little dollar in the bank to-morrow."

"Well, at least take my card," he says; "you see life is uncertain and I carry a great line of accident and life insurance," he says, handin' me his card:

THE CHORUS GIRL SAYS SOMETHING

“ISAAC EINSTEIN,
LIFE INSURANCE AGENT.”

“Aw, chase yourself—fade away, and make it a swift exit,” I says, my ankle hurtin’ and my feelin’s bein’ sorer without havin’ to look at his face.

That’s why I says these stage door Johnnies simply ain’t. It’s a pipe dream and press agent dope. Them reformers comes around sometimes, old maids, and fat old ladies, and men with bunches of alfalfa on their chins. Why don’t they go to the bathing beaches where they don’t have enough clothes on to make a humming bird’s sash, some of ’em? Most show girls is regular esquimos beside them beach hounds.

Oh, it’s a gay life if you don’t weaken—this here chorus girls’ riotous livin’—I don’t think, about as wild as one of them old-fashioned sewin’ bees my mother used to tell about where a girl got kissed every time they found a red ear, and square dances was a riot enough to call a patrol.

Let me slip you a little info! If some of them folks what’s worryin’ about us would watch theirselves, it would be better. Real life like what you see in the movies, ain’t. If you think dancin’ in a chorus ain’t earnin’ your livin’ let some of them fat reformers try it and I’ve said something—and a whole mouthful, I’m tellin’ you.

TWO STRAWS AND A BOTTLE OF POP

When my chum gets a bottle of pop,
With two straws sticking in it,
He's so much bigger than I am
I hardly can begin it,

When the pop is half way gone,
I wish so much my puller
Was strong as his, or else they'd fill
Those bottles 'way up fuller.

I'll buy some pop when I get rich,
And am ever so much taller,
But you bet I'll never pull too hard
With a kid that's so much smaller.

THE WHIP HAND

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

JACK NICHOLS, *a young clerk.*

WILBUR PRESTON, *the junior partner.*

SCENE.—*The office of Haynes and Preston, a commission firm on the Board of Trade. Several weeks after a recent failure.*

JACK NICHOLS *talks and springs a surprise.*

Mr. Preston, I am here, as you see. I understand you sent for me. Is that correct? Oh, close the door? Certainly, although I think the stenographer in the outer office has gone for lunch and Barbour is down "On Change." We are alone, it seems. What are people saying of the failure?

To tell the truth, they are dissatisfied with the settlement. As I am employed by you, I scarcely like to say. Speak freely? Shall I? You see, fifty cents on the dollar didn't make exactly a hit, on the Board.

They didn't suspect anything? What could they suspect? That something was held out? Possibly not, Mr. Preston. There were rumors, though—— Why—er—you really want to know? Well, then, that you had let your partner stand in the breach and shoulder the whole failure.

MOSTLY COMICS

You needn't look at me like that. I haven't said anything. The matter so far is safe with me. You sent for me—I can guess why—to give back the box in the vault that you took in my name. It was rather a long chance to take with any young fellow, to trust to his honesty and turn fifty thousand dollars in cash over to him—to be held until after a certain failure that hadn't happened.

Oh, don't get excited!—You see I rather suspected there was more than you told me, and to-day I looked.

Hold on! Don't try to touch me!—The money's there, every cent of it.

I'm young and I haven't anything but my salary, but I am on the level. It's rather odd, isn't it, that you expect other people to be square?

Wasn't it in the firm's agreement that the partners stand side by side in case of failure? Old man Haynes stood the brunt alone.

Keep cool! Keep cool, Mr. Preston! I'm not impudent. I'm just getting down to brass tacks, and I have the whip hand. It would be better to hold your temper. I am going to tell you a few plain facts.

I don't intend to return that money.

(Rises and leans against the table.)

There! Sit down. It won't do you any good to try to open that drawer, because I'm leaning against it. You might have a gun in it,

THE WHIP HAND

and I don't want to be shot. It's rather a messy death.

You call me a traitor. Well, that's hardly the word. I was the goat because I was young. You thought you could put it all over me, and you did for a while.

I believed your story that the box in the vault contained some valuables of your wife's, that some relatives were after. You must have anticipated the failure, Mr. Preston, and put the cold cash out of the way. It is rumored that you are arranging to go into business under a new firm name with a new partner.

Old man Haynes was old and maybe had been in the swim too long. Anyhow, he quit and took to his bed with the shame of the failure.

No use walking up and down. I'll light a cigarette, if you don't mind.

Ordinarily I wouldn't smoke in office hours before my employer, but you see the cases are reversed—now I am the capitalist.

Don't come too near. I happen to have a gun in my pocket, and it might go off. Sit down! There, that's better, because I have some more news.

Thief? Oh, your words are very rough, Mr. Preston—really very rough. When you give a man money, cold hard cash, and put it into a box in his name, who is going to prove it is yours, and then in what an ugly dilemma that puts you, as one of the firm that failed and declared himself insolvent. Rawther nawsty,

MOSTLY COMICS

what? As our English friends say. Not a pretty situation, eh?

I'm rather stupid and inclined to be honest (maybe I'll improve in time) so I didn't suspect until the rumors grew somewhat numerous.

Last night old man Haynes got out of a sick bed and killed himself. You wince a little, in spite of your effort to appear calm. It must have been, after all, a most uncomfortable morning for you, after you saw the papers. The old man has always been able to look his fellow men in the face and he brooded over this settlement and what he suspected until he ended it all.

I went this morning and looked into the box at the vault and the whole thing was as plain as day—just why you had taken out the box in my name, and made me the Angora, as it were.

Then I went out to see Jessie Haynes. She and I happen to be engaged. I asked her to marry me after the failure when her money was gone and I couldn't be accused of being a fortune hunter.

Let me tell you our story. It's rather interesting. She was out motoring, and her hat blew off, and I caught and returned it. She is deucedly good-looking. That was the beginning, and I was desperately in love, but you see she was a rich girl.

You are getting nervous? Why walk up and down? What did you say? This silly love affair does not interest you, in the least? I'm surprised; young love is always so charming,

THE WHIP HAND

Mr. Preston. Don't you know how the poets rave about Spring and Love and the young man's fancy, and all the rest of that dope?

I trust business has not made you callous to the finer things of life. Possibly our particular case may seem more important to you, in time.

Here—here—you can't get by to lock that door. I'm somewhat of an athlete—used to play on our football team at Princeton, and I try to keep in trim. Play golf out at the park, bowl a little and tennis is a crack-a-jack game for the muscles.

Don't look so bored, Mr. Preston. Getting tired of the interview? Well, you sought it—it was coming in time—in fact, I intended to see you to-day, but I've been busy staving off some inquiring reporters—oh, no, don't jump—they don't know about the money—yet. It was just the *minor* fact of the old man's suicide that held the present interest.

Let's see—where was I? Oh, yes—I 'phoned Jessie, and in spite of her sorrow, she was willing to see me. I went out to the house after I had made the discovery and I told her about the money, rather clumsily, I'm afraid, as I didn't mean to tell her quite so soon, as she was in such deep trouble, but women are darned clever about guessing—anyhow, the story came out.

She is very bitter, and to exonerate her Dad she insists on the full amount—every dollar being paid to the creditors. That is what we

MOSTLY COMICS

are going to do. You see, I speak as a capitalist, Mr. Preston. Calm yourself, do! I'll give you time to get out of town before the story breaks.

Don't try to open that drawer. I locked it while you were pacing the floor, like a caged lion or maybe it would be more appropriate to say jackal.

Well,—Good-bye—I'm resigning to save being fired, and anyhow there isn't a firm any more. Also, I have a job at a raise of twenty dollars a week.

A stall? Oh, no, I don't intend to keep the money. Keep in touch with the Board of Trade news and I'll try to keep it out of the papers, although you don't deserve it, my former employer. I rather wondered when I thought it all over that you didn't turn this over to your wife, but I have heard, do pardon me for intruding upon your domestic relations, that the said relations were somewhat strained and you didn't dare risk it for fear you might not get the cash again. Fate plays strange pranks, don't you think? Conscience makes cowards of us all or words to that effect. My! how you glare at me, Mr. Preston. I almost believe if you had the chance we'd have a little murder scene staged right here in the office. Tut! Tut!

I'll just back to the door. My congratulations. It must be so satisfactory to feel you have done the right thing by your creditors.

THE WHIP HAND

We'll be decent with you and say it's Jessie's private fortune that she's turning in to save her father's pride and honor.

The old man made that money for you, every dollar. He put up all the money when you started in business. I learned that some time ago, and you know it's true. Rather a dirty deal you gave the old fellow, Preston, don't you think?

I'll just back to the door and keep you in sight. My hand is on my revolver, in this pocket. A hold up? Sure, a pippin of a one and in a good cause.

Better luck when you fail again, and bye! bye!

IN ALOHA LAND

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

THEA, *a maiden of Hawaii.*

MRS. LESLIE, *an American lady, lately settled in the Islands.*

SCENE.—THE LANAI, *the side veranda of a bungalow in the outskirts of Honolulu.*

THEA *tells her story.*

You ask why I am sad, dear friend? My dark eyes hold a story, say you? I thought to say nought of it, and yet you have been very kind, very gracious. I believe you ask only in love—not to be curious. Since you came to live on our Hawaiian Islands I have not been so alone. I care not for tourists. Perhaps it is my dual nature. My father was an Englishman, my mother a native woman. She called me Huiha, but my father gave me another name, Dorothea. I call myself Thea—that I like the best. He always called me that—my father.

Then later came another—the one who comes not—one, dear Mrs. Leslie, from your own land of America.

I will begin at the beginning, nestling here upon the couch in your lanai with the singing birds about me; and just you and I to hear what I will tell.

IN ALOHA LAND

My father himself taught me from the books of his people. He was a scholar and a gentleman. My mother liked best her own ways. She was a creature of the tropics, untamed and free—yet worshipping my father as her lord and master, wearing the loose slip of tapa cloth and eating the native poi, which he despised though he liked the tropical fruits, the papaias, the mangoes, and he was fond of yams, and perchance liked too well the drink made from the awa root.

Though they differed much, they loved each other unto death.

'Twas first he saw her when she was wading slowly toward the reef, with the older women, hunting small shell fish, which they snared in nets. She turned and laughed at him as he stood upon the beach, shaking her long black hair and catching his heart within the strands. Often do I think of her—the picture comes as she sat weaving mats from the inner bark of the mulberry tree and prepared our food, wrapping it in ti leaves and cooking in covered heated pits of earth.

Though she prayed to her Gods, and he to the one God, yet they were true lovers, and when he died, she mourned until her soul sought his and she too passed away to the unknown land, beyond the earth, within a year of his passing.

I was but fifteen—and left alone with the little rambling garden and ramshackle house,

MOSTLY COMICS

that lies there just beyond your home. Yet it is home to me, and I love it.

I cared not what was mine if they were gone, my heart was so sad. Then *he* came, my big American, my lord, for I too called my dear one by that name.

Perchance it shocks you, you from a land where women rule, but I loved to think of him that way, and all the books from which my father taught me changed me not one whit.

'Twas on the beach at Waikiki he lay stretched in the sand, my big American, lying at full length, away from the rest, and I who like not tourists came running swiftly toward the silence apart from the bathers, and almost ran upon him.

He half rose, looking like a young god in the moonlight.

"Ah!" he cried, "'tis a moon sprite!" for I wore native dress of white with flowers in my hair. It was the dress I loved the best.

"When I run away to be in tune with the moon, she sends me one of her fairies."

"'Tis only Thea, my lord," I said, pretending great calmness, yet my pulses beat wildly.

"Thea, the moon sprite I will call you. Sit down beside me," he said, "I am lonely."

"And yet you ran away from the others," I answered, pointing toward the bathers.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"From cattle herding together, but I do not run from moon sprites."

IN ALOHA LAND

“You are malinini,” I said, quickly.

“Why call me names?” he laughed.

“No, I call you not names,” I said. “That means newcomer.”

“Ah, that sounds less aggressive,” he said. “Come, sit down, I pray you, pretty one. Do not be afraid of me. I would not hurt a hair of your lovely head. I need you, little maiden, for my heart is heavy. Away across the sea there is a girl who promised to be my wife. To-day came a letter from her. She had wearied of waiting and married another—a man of wealth who could give her all the wonderful things my love could not purchase. I have thought all day it would be better to end it all.”

“To die? No, no, my lord, not that!” I cried. “I saw my father and my mother die. Not that!”

“You call me lord, little one?”

“The word slipped,” I replied. “Forgive the familiarity. My mother called my father that. She was a native. He of English birth.”

“Who cares whether I live or die?” he asked with gloom and sadness in his tone.

“I should care, I think,” I answered. “You are big and strong and yet gentle. But—I am too bold.”

“Too bold—you tender, winsome thing. Thus is the violet bold, or the dainty humming bird.” This he said to me, my big American.

MOSTLY COMICS

This was the beginning of our friendship, dear Mrs. Leslie. Oh, wonderful, enchanted days! Together we wandered through the long matted grasses or sat beneath the shade of thick gnarled trees. Together we went spinning along the white winding coral-powdered road, palm bordered, with the riot of foliage in the jungle beyond.

We bathed in the sapphire waters, away from the other bathers and the green tiers of the hotels, or lay in the sand watching the rosy coral reefs and the melting opal tints of land and sea.

From afar came the calls of the surf bathers in their black and yellow dugouts, but we were happiest alone. My lord liked me best in my native dress, with flowers in my hair.

Into some colorful retreat we wandered, where showering ferns and brilliant flowering vines, or the glory of the flame tree made all seem like fairy land. Kono, the mild south wind, lulled us to dreaminess and I would softly strum the ukulele calling out some plaintive strain.

"You are a witch, my Thea," he said to me. "And you have given me new life and hope. I want you to be my wife."

Oh friend, oh dear Mrs. Leslie, how sweet were his words to me, for I adored him!

Where is he now, dear friend, you ask? That is why I grieve.

One day news came that his father was ill unto death, in your land across the sea, and he,

IN ALOHA LAND

my lord, had to go away. I wept and clung about his neck.

“You will never return, my lord,” I said.

“Not return! Why, Thea, my loved one! You are my mate-woman. I will come to you as soon as I may, dear one,” he said, holding me to his heart.

“Wait,” I said. “Here is a shell. Know you the story of the singing shell, that was guarded by watchmen from hill to hill and yet stolen from the temple? Only did the little shell sing when it came to its own again.

“Sing into this shell and it will hold the voice of my beloved.” So he sang into the shell and gave it to me.

“When I am gone,” he said, “my voice will be there, and when I come again, the little shell will sing of my return.”

But, dear friend, the shell is silent. He comes not. Only a murmuring comes to me when I hold it to my ear.

This is my story. I must go to my little home, and I thank you for listening. Perhaps I feel less lonely now I have told.

Hark! What is that? A voice! 'Tis his! My shell is singing.

(Chorus,¹—Music “Aloha.”)

Who comes up the winding walk? 'Tis he, my

^{[1} *The music of chorus, not the words, may be played softly off-stage; or may be omitted. If the music is played the strain may continue softly until end of monologue.]*

MOSTLY COMICS

lord. My big American. Gordon! Gordon!
I am here, my lord! 'Tis little Thea!

He is holding out his arms. Oh, my friend,
he has come back to me! I must fly to him, to
my dearest, dearest lord!

LUCINDY JONES HAS A HOLIDAY

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

LUCINDY JONES, *an old-fashioned country spinster.*

MARIA MOSELY, *her friend.*

SCENE.—LUCINDY'S *sitting-room.*

LUCINDY *rocks and talks.*

My land, Maria Mosely, here I am home agin, and still I ain't tore to pieces with pushin' through them crowds of animals in the city. Talk about a stampede of cattle—cattle is real human beside them human bein's where I been. Myrtle Busby invited me to spend Christmas with her in the city "fur the holidays and a rest," she wrote.

I went, though I had declared I wa'n't goin' for a long time agin, after the last visit, and I felt like a tree blowed by the wind instead of restin' and it's a wonder I'm livin' to tell the tale.

You know I went to see Myrtle two years ago come 'Thanksgivin' and was wore out afterward for a month, but I must be gittin' lite-headed the way I'm persuaded agin' my better jedgment. That last time I was to see Myrtle before this I went to a football game—and of all the fool performances! Myrtle's oldest boy was in the

MOSTLY COMICS

team, and she was awful anxious to go and took me. We near froze settin' there, and you believe me, all it was, Maria, was a lot of crazy lookin' boys in all kinds of fool togs and masks and leather things on their noses and pads on their cheeks, runnin' all over a field with a big ball, knockin' each other down, tryin' to get the ball over a line like a lot of fool grown-up children! A doctor run every little while with a suitcase to see if anybody was hurt.

Reg'ler child's play it was, if it wa'n't so rough. Myrtle and the rest got plum excited about it, and a lot of young idiots was yellin' and wavin' flags like they come out of the asylum for the feeble minded down to Poky Corners.

That was bad enough, Maria, but this year it was wuss for I was right in the thick of the fight—not football but wuss, shoppin',—with Myrtle and the rest of the shoppers, it bein' Christmas time. Myrtle had to go to bed the day after Christmas, wore out with tryin' to think what to give each one and then buyin' the stuff.

The second day after Christmas she was down-town changin' everything that was give to her because it was too large or too small or she'd ruther have suthin' else.

Then, too, she had a family dinner with all the relations and that bunch of relatives of hern would drive a body distracted. Nobody can choose the folks that's related to 'em. Lucky

LUCINDY JONES HAS A HOLIDAY

Christmas only comes onct a year. I near lost my wits with the noise of horns and drums and runnin' trains and toys that jumped and near tripped me up every minute.

I remember when a few oranges and a little bag of candy or a new gingham dress and maybe a rag doll or two made me happy. Nowadays children has to have the earth, and then they ain't satisfied.

Myrtle's allus talkin' about child welfare an' lettin' children just grow as a plant grows, but I ain't never seed no plants but weeds what didn't need directin' and spankin' onct in a while, the children I mean not the plants, of course.

Myrtle brought her children and them ideas to see me onct and near wrecked the farm, lettin' 'em grow and foller out their young lives. They broke the pump and let the cows out of the pasture and set fire to a haystack, and she had to go home when her oldest boy fell off the windmill playin' he was climbin' a mast in a shipwreck.

I wa'n't glad he broke his arm, but leastways I think the hand of Providence was a-workin' in the matter jest the same, for I was wore out with child welfare I can tell you, Maria Mosely, and simply achin' to use a horse whip on the inner-cent plants as Myrtle called her offsprings.

Myrtle took me to the Opery, one night, when I was visitin' her this Christmas and things city folks enjoys is plum ludricrous. A fat man with quite a stummick and outlandish clothes

MOSTLY COMICS

with a ostrich plume in his hat come out on the stage and sung in a langwidge nobody ever heard and I don't believe half the folks in the audience understood neither.

Then a considerable sized woman squawked so you could hear her a mile. It was wuss than a hen before her head gits cut off. Then another man in a red suit kept runnin' around lookin' like the old Nick himself. Myrtle said the Opery was *Faust*. I didn't say nothin', pretendin' to enjoy it, but I'd ruther hear our church choir sing on a sociable night a blame sight.

When the whole crowd on the stage sung together you couldn't hear yourself think. Myrtle was tryin' hard to entertain me so I didn't let on even when we went and set in the balcony to look at a dance their oldest son arranged when he was home from college fur the holidays.

You won't believe the scandalous twistin's and shakin's they call dancin' nowadays, Maria. And the clothes! Well, them young gals didn't have on much above the waist, nor below neither fur that matter. Myrtle seemed proud and said it was a beautiful party, and I says, "Yes, you could see a plenty," but I guess she didn't git my inner meanin' for she said she was glad I enjoyed myself. Ain't no accountin' for tastes as that old woman they tell about said when she kissed the cow. Tastes sure do differ. Give me the Virginia Reel we used to have and decent

LUCINDY JONES HAS A HOLIDAY

clothes to cover you. I don't keer if I am old-fashioned.

I don't know what this world's a-comin' to, Maria. In my estimation we're in the last days and are goin' to be visited by some flamin' jedgment for sech carryin's on.

But I'm home agin in my old rockin' cheer, in my own settin' room, and I think the Lord willin', I'll stay here fur quite some spell. I ain't much givin' to laughin', Maria, but Myrtle's idea of restin' in the city pretty nigh makes me laugh out loud.

WHEN CUPID DECIDES

I wish I could tell which one I like best;
There's Harold who doesn't seem quite like
the rest,
He waltzes divinely, and is dreamy and slow,
When he looks down, your heart sends a
wonderful glow
To your cheek. It is really not anything
much
That he says—"The dance of the evening,"
and such
Old stuff as that—he's above that poor
chatter,
Harold's eyes tell a lot more than another
man's patter.
Then I one step with Bobbie. "Say, Girlie,
you look
Like a magazine cover. Please hand out the
hook
To those other poor stiff's. I am mad about
you."
I'm afraid Bobbie's a gusher, and couldn't be
true,
To one lonesome maiden. I fox-trot with
Gus,
He's a little bit fat, and sometimes makes a
fuss,
Panting and breathless when we turn in the
dance,

WHEN CUPID DECIDES

Yet Gus has a car that was made over in
France,
And another from England. He's a generous
lad,
If he only would diet, he'd not be so bad.
But the toddler is Tommy. He can give you
a whirl
That would win all the love of a dance-lov-
ing girl.
His smile is a winner, he's cheery and bright,
You could toddle with Tommy almost every
night,
And never grow weary. They are all very
fine.
I think if I stood them along in a line
'Twould be quite hard to choose and I never
could tell
Which one I liked best, I like all so well
That my wishes go flying and I am afraid,
I perchance may be shelved a saddened old
maid.
But stay! There is Charlie, who hasn't the
knowledge
Of fox-trot, or one step. He's just out of
college,
And is working like mad to stage a career.
I don't seem to flutter when Charlie is near.
Yet, he certainly *is*, good looking and kind,
Thinking it over, I wouldn't quite mind
Seeing Charlie at meals, each day tête-à-tête,
Anyhow, he has asked me, so he may be my
fate.

MOSTLY COMICS

I'll just write a letter and answer to-day,
I wouldn't like Charlie to be inveigled away
By some other girl. It might do for the rest,
It has come all at once,—why, I like Charlie
best!

He's the chap that will wear well, right
through the years,

Sturdy and strong—through the sunshine and
tears,

I won't write—I'll 'phone him, "Hello,
Charlie dear,

You said you'd be waiting every minute to
hear;

Come over to-night—Oh, I'll make you guess,
The answer. You can't wait? Well then, it
is—Yes."

THE LAMENT OF SEVENTEEN

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

PERCY *himself*.

The OTHERS, viz: The useless members of the household, called the family.

SCENE.—*The home of PERCY, aged seventeen.*

PERCY unbosoms his grouch.

Of all the utterly imbecile arrangements that Nature ever planned, that of grouping individuals in families is about the most inane. Rabbits come in groups, but lions and elephants come alone. About one is sufficient in a family collection at a time, but human beings have to have brothers and sisters, and even infants, all growing up together so that you are liable to step on a child at most any hour that you are compelled to return to the home domicile for food or a change of raiment.

The family is the bulwark of the nation, our Prof. said in class the other day. I'd like to invite him to our shack for a week, and he'd call it the barricade, but professors are moony individuals. I bet they never know how many offsprings they have—anyhow, this Prof. isn't conjugated, or I mean spliced, though Aunt Mab, that's my relative that hasn't been able

MOSTLY COMICS

to catch anything but measles and the things that came along in her childish career, I mean she missed fire when she went gunning for a male in her youthful days and now she's thirty-five by her own count and about forty-five by Pa's, at least he says behind her back (she's Ma's sister) that she's old enough to eat hay—which must be a horsy term, about obsolete in these buzzwagon days, I guess we Moderns would say her tires were flat, anyhow, as I started to say, she's tried hard enough to annex this particular Prof. to herself.

But getting down to cases, there's nothing that a guy does that escapes the family optics. When I attained my majority—well almost—I was seventeen last June—I balked on Ma buying my clothes, and strange to say, Pa stood by me.

"We men have to hang together, Perce," he said, which is the most logical thing I have heard him utter for many a day.

If you go to a dance on a school night, the whole family howls and as for snooping, if I reach twenty without landing in jail for murdering that useless piece of furniture that goes by the name of George, my brother of twelve, it'll be a miracle, and those things aren't pulled off to-day. How George ever got annexed to the family, I don't know. He must have been left on the door step.

The funny thing about a family too, is that nobody ever has any cash. You can hint yourself black in the face, but a sudden deafness

THE LAMENT OF SEVENTEEN

falls like a pall on the whole blamed group. Ma begins to talk expenses—Pa says there's no business—not a-tall—Sis says if she just had the money she knows is in circulation somewhere, although she has no actual experience of the same, she knows what she would do, but she never divulges what it is. Then George begins to talk about a new ball bat, or that his boxing gloves are worn out, and I'd like to know what show a bird has to open up negotiations in that kind of a howl. It sure is the cootie's collar button.

It's queer about a fellow's sister, too. Women are hard to understand, but a person they call a sister—well, she doesn't seem to belong, that's all. You take Sis—she's only a year and a half younger than I am, but she's in some of my classes, and sometimes she seems middle-aged. Not that she can't dance. I guess she's good looking enough, although I can't see it, but she has such an elderly way of seeming superior. Half the time she's on the floor on her stomach with her heels in the air reading a book, that is when Ma isn't around, and if you come near her when you're ready to go out, she says, "Not a red. You couldn't pry gold from me with a jimmy. I'm clean. That last fudge party was my undoing. If Hard Luck was my maternal ancestor, I'd be sitting on her lap with my lily arms around her neck. Midas is a name in myth and story. The mint is a building, but its contents, I am con-

MOSTLY COMICS

vinced, are nil—it is a vacuum. I may look like the bee's ankle or the caterpillar's choker, but it's a mirage. Better have a fade-out—it's the end of the reel."

Say, what can you do with anybody like that? And she goes on chewing her gum—when Ma ain't around—without looking up. That's a sample of her line of chatter. She can hand it out by the yard. Her advice, which she hands around freely, I never take. It's closer than her cash. Once when I didn't pretend to take her advice, but did, I got my face slapped. I inadvertently dropped a remark about Cecile Brewer being shy, after the manner of my sex, and she never batted an eyelash, but advised me to try being a sheik, and take a kiss by force.

I did, and believe me, Cecile plays basketball or something, and she near broke my jaw when I tried to be spoony. That was when I was sixteen. I'm getting wised up now. I guess Cecile owed me a grudge. I invited her to the football game and managed to pry three dollars and fifty cents out of the family exchequer, and when we got to the field, the tickets were four dollars. I couldn't beg, borrow nor steal the necessary cash, so we had to go to a movie and get some ice-cream. Believe you me, I never heard the last of that at home or abroad for a year. No girl ever could keep a secret, and as I remarked before, women are hard to understand. We men are certainly puzzled at the problem they present.

THE LAMENT OF SEVENTEEN

Life is a queer estate. What with dodging a girl's small brother and sister when you go over to see her, with filling your life with threats for the next of kin of both sexes, that group in your family, with trying to dig up a few bones from the parental purses of both sexes, the parents, I mean, not the purses—the path to twenty-one and freedom is anything but one of roses. It's like a stretch of highway that's closed for repairs.

Then the name they wished on me, "Percy," just because we had an ancestor way back in colonial days, Sir Edgar Montmorency de Percy, or something. Ma used to call me Pertie until a year or two ago. When I was a kid about twelve, one of the gang called me that one day and I gave him a bloody nose and nearly knocked his block off, so I wasn't bothered any more. Ma is fond of me, I suppose, but she doesn't use any judgment. She tells too much.—The other day I heard her tell some callers that I had shaved for the first time and that her boy had quite grown up, and how sad it was, and the other caller said too bad and they almost cried talking about it. You'd think I was about to die or something.

It's getting worse every day. What happened the other night? It was a logical dance night, Friday, and for a wonder nobody kicked when I came down in my Tux. I felt sort of self-conscious, for it was the first time I'd worn it, but I walked into the dining room—Ma had

MOSTLY COMICS

called me three times—trying to look indifferent—George giggled—but Ma told him to be quiet.

“You’re late,” she said.

“Well, I couldn’t get into the bath room to take a bath,” I answered. “All the family wants to wash at the same time, anyhow, it’s a cinch, you can gamble on it.”

“Cleanliness being next to Godliness,” pipes up Sis, looking wise.

“Wish they’d all take their religion in turns then,” I said sarcastically.

“Don’t Percy look fine in his new tuxedo? I told Mrs. West I bought him a tuxedo suit because he had promised never to smoke until he was twenty-one,” Ma said.

George groaned and Sis rolled up her eyes and folded her hands in a saintly way.

“Shut up,” thundered Pa to George.

No use for them to guy me, for I don’t smoke. I tried it once and it made me sick, but I’m going to try it again. However, I didn’t feel it necessary to impart that information to the assembled multitude at the family board.

“Ma,” I said. “Please refrain from talking to the other women as though I were a kid like George.”

“Who’s a kid?” says George. “Anyway I got your goat.”

“Be silent, young man,” said Pa. “And you, Percy, don’t tell your mother what to say. Sit down and eat your dinner.”

THE LAMENT OF SEVENTEEN

"Yes, hurry," said Ma. "Father and I are going to a dance at the Club."

"Why—can't I have the car?" I asked aghast. "Gee whiz."

"Alma'll have to walk, or is it Bess or Madge to-night?" asked Sis sweetly.

"Who's your Sheba now, oh mighty Sheik," Sis queried languidly. "Perhaps it's Elsie Roberts."

"That prune."

"Whom did you say, Miss Prune?" asked Aunt, who is quite deaf. "That's a queer name. I nearly married a man named Plum once."

"He must have been a berry," said George, in an undertone.

"George, be quiet," said Mother, decidedly.

"Young girls are very bold to-day," continued Aunt.

"Oh Aunt, you make me weary, not to say ill," piped up Sister.

"Let me hear no more from any of you," said Mother severely.

"What about the car?" I asked.

"Nothing doing. We're going to use our own car once in a while," said Pa, "if you will pardon my boldness," he added sarcastically.

"We cannot go to a dance in evening clothes without a car," Ma put in.

Imagine one's parents going to dances. What is the world coming to? Pa's too fat to dance anyway. These were my thoughts.

MOSTLY COMICS

Of course I did not express them. I might to Ma, but not to Pa.

"Can't you get a taxi, and let me have the car as long as I've have arranged?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," said Pa. "We can walk or any old thing as long as our children have all the comforts of life."

"You can't go, Pa," piped up that infantile demon, George. "Perce has on your black tie. He tore his tying it."

"Ah, dry up," I whispered.

Then Pa exploded.

"Young man, how many times have I told you to let my things alone. The only reason my clothes are safe is that they're too big. This is a fine age we are living in—what with the jazz, and flappers, and short dresses, and bobbed hair——"

"Pardon the correction, father," said Sis complacently. "You are speaking of clothes and customs that are out of date, obsolete as it were. We are doing up our tresses—and lengthening our skirts, although jazz is still prevalent in the land."

"None of your impertinence, young lady," Pa continued.

"What with the cat's whiskers and Bee's knees and all of George's inane talk——"

"Why pick on me?" George put in.

"Be still until I finish. Never speak while older people are talking."

"Then I'll be dumb in this family by the

THE LAMENT OF SEVENTEEN

time I'm grown," George said, "because I wouldn't get a chance."

"That's just what I was saying. There's a lack of respect these times that is certainly, if I may borrow your elegant expressions, the camel's suspenders, or the antelope's earrings."

"As for the car, take it by all means, and leave your family stranded, marooned at home. I won't go at all now," said Pa, and stormed out of the room.

"Now see what you've done," said Ma, "and I have a new dress and you've made your father angry."

"Percy," Pa called, from the front room, and I dragged my way to the room, shakily, because Pa is some tongue lasher when he is angry.

Pa pulled me to one side—was he going to chastise me? I'd never stand for that. The world was large and I might go to California and go into the movies.

But Pa's hand was on my shoulder as man to man, and when I looked up there was a twinkle in his eye.

"Perce, we men must stand together. You've saved my life. If there is anything I loathe it's a dance; Perce, let me impart a deadly secret. I'm too fat to trip the toe fantastic and I am tired. Beat it into the hall—take the car and get away but come home some time before morning—I'll cover your escape"—and he actually gave me a five dollar bill.

MOSTLY COMICS

“Pa, you’re the ant’s sunbonnet and the bumble bee’s lavallière,” I said, grasping his hand as I beat it.

After all, we men must stick together.

MAMMY LIZA TELLS ABOUT MISTER SAMSON AND MISS DELILAH

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

MAMMY LIZA.

ANDREW JACKSON.

The Rest of the PICKANINNIES.

SCENE.—MAMMY'S *cabin at the close of day.*

MAMMY LIZA *relates a story.*

MAMMY *sings:*

Reign, Reign, ovah mah soul,
Reign Massa Jesus, reign.

(She pauses.)

Ah knowed it. Ah sho' knowed it. Ah done
felt it in mah ole bones.

You chillen, Ah often tells you, is worser'n
dem plegs of Egypt! G'wan 'way from heah.
Ah wants ter res' mah bones an' set still in
peace after mah day's wuk. No sah—No
sahree—no story to-day. Dis heah teasin' has
got to tumminate immijit.

Ah'll give you sumpin to whine about, Andrew
Jackson, in 'bout a minute, a whalin'—dat's
what. You thought Ah was gwine tell you de
story Ah promised you yistiddy? Ah don'
seem to recommember no sech promise.

MOSTLY COMICS

Maybe Ah did. Well, set down. Ah'm reg'ler wo' out wid yo' teasin'.

Which story waz it? 'Bout a strong man? Dat was Mister Samson. Ah wish he was heah to-day an' Ah'd git him to whale you—Shet up howlin'. He ain't heah, am he?

Well, Mr. Samson, he sho' was strong. Oh, he could jes' walk up to dem mountains yondah in Tennessee an' push 'em right ovah wid his lil finger widdout even lookin'.

How big is a mountain? Why, it reaches from de earf to de sky. Ah reckon dat am de way we got dem tunnels dey tell 'bout. Mister Samson jes' push right froo de mountin' side.

Mr. Samson was pussonal 'quainted wid some folks called de Phillipines, an' one time when dem Phillipines got too sassy, he jes' pick up de jaw-bone of a ole mule what died in his place an' killed 'bout a thousan' of 'em.

Look out, Andrew Jackson! Don' look so skairt, or yo' eyes will jes' natchelly pop out of yo' haid. Dah certain seems a lot of brains what you ain't got, boy. Set quiet and shet yo' mouf. Ah's doin' de discoursin'.

Well, Mister Samson got took up wid a likely gal name Miss Delilah. She was one of dem Phillipine ladies, an' her folks wa'n't no friends to Mister Samson in dere hearts neder. In fack, he was de pusson whot dey wasn't de fondest of.

Anyway, Mister Samson couldn't see nobody fur lookin' at Miss Delilah—de gals in his town

SAMSON AND DELILAH

simply wasn't on earth, when Miss Delilah come in view.

But she was a wise one. She was one of dem vampuses, an' vampuses is like de typhum fever, easier to ketch dan what dey is to shake. She was boun' dat woman, to fin' out what mek Mister Samson so strong, not only kase she was bustin' wid curiositurn, but kase her folks was eggin' her on.

"G'wan an' fin' out dat secret, an' we give you a pretty new silk dress," dey say.

Ev'y woman lak a new silk dress, so she say to Mister Samson, "Ah sure is proud of you, what in tarnation mek you so strong? How come, none of de othah folks is lak you?"

"Oh," he say, "Ah ain't so strong. Tie me up an' see."

An' she tied him up wid ropes, and then sneak out an' call her folks, but he bust right through the ropes when he think de fam'ly is comin' marchin' in.

Miss Delilah was mad, but didn't 'tend to be an' she say, "Ain't you de jokinest pusson?"

De next day when she see him, she say, "Mornin', Mister Samson," an' he say, "Mornin', Miss Delilah."

An' she say, "Is you strong as evah dis mornin'?"

He says, "Ah's all right. Ah ain't no thicker nor no thinner, 'an I was when you see me befo'. Ain't gain or lose a pound."

Den she tease him some mo', but she couldn't

MOSTLY COMICS

fin' out an' she say, "Yo' is beginnin' to dislove me, Mister Samson, Ah sho' believe."

He swo' dat she was de onliest one.

"Ah could of had mos' any one of dem Phillipines I wanted," she purr like a cat, "but Ah only keered for you an' yet you won' tell me one lil bit of a secret."

"Ah'll take dis matter under considerment," Mr. Samson said, beginning to weaken. So she tease an' tease, "If you sho' love me lak you say you does you'll tell me," an' finally he got all wo' out lak Ah does wid you chillen, an' he says, "If you cut off my har I gits weak," kase he had long har what was de style for men dem days. Luck wa'n't walkin' hand in hand wid dat man dat day, dat's suttin.

Miss Delilah she say, pussuadin' like, "You look tired, Mister Samson. Don' you want to take a lil nap?"

Not spectin' nothin', he say, "Thanks, Miss Delilah for de suggestions. Ah guess Ah will take a lil nap," for he was plum wo' out wid her lak Ah is wid you chillens, beggin' an' teasin' sometimes.

While he was asleep, she done cut off his har an' dem 'lations of hern, dem Phillipines come in den an' put out his eyes.

Dey wa'n't very sociable pussons, Ah reckon.

Dry up, Andrew Jackson. Ain't no use snivellin' now. It's done. Dat was better'n what Mister Samson mought have 'spected anyhow, kase it look fur a while lak there was gwine

SAMSON AND DELILAH

to be a corpse what answered to de name of Samson. He sho' was courtin' tribulation, dat man.

Well, anyhow, Mister Samson got even wid dem Phillipines, kase one day when dey fasten him up, he went feelin' roun' fur de posts of de place whar he wuz and pulled de whole buildin' down on his enemies. I reckon his har had growed out long agin.

An' Mister Samson was done gathered to his fo' fathers. Folks dem days seemed lak to have fo' fathers, but Ah never hearn nothin' 'bout fo' mothers.

Now, go 'long you chillen an' when yo' Ma wants to cut yo' har you keep it short so won't nobody else git a chanst to pull you by de wool. Clar out, dat's all Ah's gwine to tell you—dis minute. Ah's gwine smoke my pipe.

(She hums.)

Reign! Reign obah mah soul,
Reign! Massa Jesus, reign.

FELINE PSYCHOLOGY
OR, THE MONOLOGUE OF A CAT

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

THE CAT, THEDA BARA.

THE MASTER.

THE MISTRESS.

“CHIN-CHIN”—*the dog.*

MAGGIE, *the maid.*

SCENE.—*An elegant furnished apartment on the drive.*

What THE CAT thinks.

I suppose human beings think a cat hasn't any opinion, but we don't have eyes that shine in the dark for nothing.

Away back there when I was a kitten and a monstrous creature they called a baby used to squeeze me until I squealed, I had my own ideas when the mother used to say, “Oh, the little darling, how he loves kitty!” I don't know what love is, but it must be something very depressing. There was a person they called Aunt who would say, “No, no, baby mustn't be rough.” But the mother always protested it was all right, and when friends came in she would hunt around for me to let them see how cute baby was with kitty, and how he loved her.

FELINE PSYCHOLOGY

I used to run and hide when that monster crawled toward me.

Once I gave the monster a great long scratch, and then I was in disgrace, for the baby, as they called him, shrieked for an hour and I was scolded. But I said to myself, "There, see how you like it." And I peeped out from under the sofa and purred to myself with joy.

One day I couldn't stand the maulings any more, and slipped out. I made up my mind to get away from the monster. For a while I was an alley cat, living in doorways and eating from garbage cans, but although there was a sort of freedom about that kind of life that was alluring, yet when it began to grow colder I thought it wise to look for a house.

At last I found a big building where there was a janitor, and he let me stay by the furnace, and there was a blue-eyed maid up-stairs who used to feed me. Then one day she begged the janitor to let her have me for company, and so up-stairs I went and lived on the fat of the land. Most of the time I stayed in the kitchen, but once in a while I wandered through the apartment. That was a wonderful place, like a palace, with soft rugs and shiny floors, and a big glass room all palms they called a sun parlor, and out of the window there was a park and a big lake.

When I went into the rest of the rooms there was no one there, except one day when a man with a kind face sat smoking, and he looked at

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me in surprise. "Well, Kitty, where did you come from?" he asked, and he seemed so friendly that I jumped up on his lap and began to purr. For a while he sat reading and smoking, and I laid in his lap and he stroked my fur. Then suddenly he jumped up and took me out to the kitchen.

"Maggie," he said, to the blue-eyed maid, "it's about time for the Mrs. and Chin-Chin; the cat will have to vamoose."

"Oh, no plaze—I'm awful fond of Thayda—that's what I calls her, Thayda Bara; I've had her for a month, sir, and the Missus and Chin-Chin ain't got wise."

"All right, I'm blind and dumb, if you are enough of a diplomatist to keep out of hot water," said he.

"Shure," says the blue-eyed maid, "I keeps her in my room, and Chin-Chin is mostly too swell to come into my kitchen, so I'm safe enough."

"I don't think the Mrs. bothers much with the kitchen, either," he said, and laughed, but that laugh didn't sound like a laugh but a sigh. "However, if you are clever enough to keep her out of sight, Maggie, she stays," and he gave me a final pat and went away.

After that he snuggled me in his arms when the Mrs., as he called her, and Chin-Chin were away. If she left the dog behind, the Master would put him into the sun parlor because he'd sniff and bark around although he could not see

FELINE PSYCHOLOGY

me as I snuggled out of sight in the Master's smoking jacket, but I could peep at him. My, but he was an ugly dog with a face that looked as though it had been pushed in, and he had a snarly temper, although when I was in the kitchen I could hear the Missus through the swinging door into the diningroom calling him her "Babykins and little lamb ——"

"Ugh!" said Maggie, the blue-eyed maid, "she kisses that imp of Satan. Sure it nearly gives me the say sickness. Him bein' so fond of kids and stoppin' avury wan he sees in the strate, and her hatin' the sight of the 'dirty, tiresome little wretches,' as she calls them. A nice, clane cat like you, Thayda, is worth twanty of them 'babykins' with the Chinymen faces."

One day when Maggie was feeding me the Mrs. came in suddenly and saw me. She was a blond lady and she had on a pale blue satin dress and wore a long, shiny string of pearls. "Oh, heavens, where did that awful creature come from?" she shrieked. "Don't let my Babykins come out here. Put it right out; we'll all get diseased. Cats are great disease spreaders."

"Sure," said Maggie, "it's the janitor's cat and I'll put her right out." My heart was broken for I thought Maggie was a traitor, but she just put me on the step and whispered, "Wait, Thayda, I'll take you in when the ould hin's gone."

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We had a grand time for a while because the Mrs. went to a place called Florida, and the Master and his friends let me roam around the place and petted me until I was a regular aristocrat.

The winter went by and the snow melted. I was in the sun parlor most of the time, so I could see the changes. And one day the Master looked out and said, "Why, Theda, Spring is here. The buds are on the trees and soon the lilacs will be blooming. Isn't it splendid, Theda?" and he stretched out his arms and smiled. "And the little children running about so happily. God bless their little hearts, how I love them!" I peeped out of the glass windows and the lake was big and blue, and people walked around in the park.

Then all was sad again, because the Mrs. came home and that beastly Chin-Chin.

Once when the Mrs. was away, I heard Maggie say when she went to the big windows—"Well, if summer ain't here, Thayda." And I jumped up on a couch and looked out. "See the people in bathin' an' layin' in the sand an' their childer runnin' around. That'll get her goat, Thayda."

I saw how happy everyone seemed, and I didn't understand, but that night Maggie said, "What did I tell you, Thayda, herself's kickin' about them bathers agin;" and when the ice man came Maggie told him the same thing. "She's wantin' to git away agin," she said,

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“them bathers offends her sight. Herself says it’s a crime for the Hoyee Poyee to be allowed on the Grand Drive, though God knows what Hoyee Poyee is. I heard them talkin’ at the table.

“‘Shure,’ says himself, the Master, ‘the Creator shouldn’t have made such mussy creatures,’ says he, ‘but just the same, they sames to be enjoyin’ thimselves,’ he says.

“‘I can’t see where you git your playbayin’ ideas,’ she says. ‘Chin-Chin can’t stand them, he barks and barks from the machine.’

“‘Chin-Chin is probably too much of a Chiuk to like water,’ says himself, who like me and Thayda hates the sight of that homely baste. Don’t you, Thayda?’” I purred, cuddling in her lap.

Then came a day when I had a wonderful secret, and so did Maggie, because she fixed me a nice box with a soft cotton shawl in it, and I was so proud and pleased that I thought, “Now I will be welcome, and the Missus will surely notice me.”

So when Maggie was busy I slipped through the swinging door when she opened it, and went into the big living-room. Chin-Chin was curled up in an armchair, but he rose and commenced to bark. “What’s the matter with Mother’s lambkins?” asked the Mrs. anxiously. But I wasn’t afraid, I walked along proudly with my head in the air. Chin-Chin barked and barked. “What does he see? Oh, merciful Heavens, a

MOSTLY COMICS

horrible cat. Shoo—get out—shoo!” But I walked proudly right up to the Master.

“Drive the creature out, Robert. Why, it has a rat or some dreadful thing in the mouth.”

The Master looked down. “Well, well, Theda, at last you have crossed the Rubicon, and come right in before the Powers-That-Be. What have we here—a kitten—you wanted to show me your baby, didn’t you?”

“Robert,” the Mrs. screamed, “don’t touch that horrible creature. She may be diseased. And make her take out that other insect in her mouth.”

The Master paid no attention to her. He took me and my kitten in his lap and kept petting me. “Theda,” he said, “you have committed the unpardonable sin—no babies are allowed in this apartment. The would-be mothers are all too busy playing bridge and going to clubs. Shut up that blamed bark or I’ll break your neck,” he said to Chin-Chin, and the dog laid down and growled, but stopped barking.

“Robert, I am amazed that you would speak to Babykins like that,” the Mrs. said, running to her dog, and taking him in her arms. “That cat must get right out of here.”

The Master rose. “Come on, Theda; tomorrow I’ll find you a nice home.”

The next day we went, the Master, my baby, and I, into the country in the machine. The baby and I were in a nice box Maggie fixed for

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us, and she cried when we left. We went spinning along past the many fields and the truck gardens—I did not know what they were then—until we came to a little town and a little house by the side of the road, and a whole troop of rosy faced children came out to meet us. They jumped on the running board and climbed all around; then when Mr. Robert took out the box everyone cried out, “Oh, Mother, Mother, here’s a kitty and her baby. See what Uncle Robert has brought us.”

A pretty lady with a baby in her arms, followed by a pleasant man, came out of the house. They all made so much fuss over me and my baby that I was very happy. No more hiding in rooms and sneaking around when the Mrs. was out.

“Theda, good-bye,” says Mr. Robert when he started away, “I leave you at this little house, with the great out of doors. This is the babies’ paradise. It isn’t the house you live in, Theda, but the people and the babies that make a home. Here you can be as proud of your baby as you like.”

The pretty lady with the baby in her arms sighed as he drove away in his big machine. “Poor Robert,” she said, “he’s going back to that beautiful place—the big building where no children are allowed.”

OVER THE 'PHONE WIRES

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

Mrs. CLUBBY.

VARIOUS LISTENERS.

SCENE.—*Home of Mrs. CLUBBY.*

Mrs. CLUBBY *talks.*

Hello—Hello. Is this the office of the “Daily Whirl”? I want the Club Editor, please—Is this the Club Editor?—Say, Operator, can't you comprehend that when I call the “Daily Whirl” I don't want the Gas Company?

Well, you gave me the wrong number—The “Daily Whirl,” please—yes, a newspaper—Laketon 0500—Yes. Hello—Is this the Club Editor?—What, the Stretchem Rubber Company? Oh, dear! Op-er-a-tor!! The wrong number again. How many do you usually give before you deign to give the correct one? Laketon 0500!

Hello! Is this the Club Editor? Oh, yes—Well, this is Mrs. Clubby. I have some news for you. Oh, by the way, we didn't like the way you began the Column last week—Well, you said this:—

“The Clubs have opened for their usual winter warfare and a lively season is anticipated.”

OVER THE 'PHONE WIRES

Now, that sounds rather as though we were belligerent and we are not at all—occasionally there are a few differences—but really nothing much, my dear. Of course some women are catty—I won't mention names, however, but I just say my say—and stand my ground.

Oh, yes, here is the news:

“Last week the great drive for the Old People's Home closed. About \$60,000 was taken in for the home and after expenses for lunches, dinners, dances, for the Committee, printing, etc., were paid, about \$100.00 was realized for the Home.”

Splendid drive we had, my dear. Just wonderful—here is another item:

“The Psycho-Analytical Woman's Club will hold its opening meeting on Friday afternoon. A critical analysis of the atom and its relation and co-relation to all the intricate parts—singly and as a whole, a glowing introspection of the flowing streams of consciousness, will be given by Professor Solomon Wiseacre, whose talks are so deep”—Oh, very deep, my dear.

Try to run out and hear him, Miss Scribber. He is a marvel, and so instructive. Positively oozes knowledge. I don't quite understand it all myself, but it's marvelous.

I think that is all, Miss Scribber. By the way, if you could use my picture, it might sort of add—I mean, people notice a picture, you know—Of course I really prefer not to have you use it—What? Mrs. Getthere wanted hers in

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this week—Oh my dear—she's not at all prominent—~~that~~ that is, nothing except her nose—Do as you like. I wonder if you couldn't have luncheon with me down-town to-morrow—oh, do—Yes—at the Athletic Club—yes, at twelve-thirty. I'll just bring the picture—and if you want to use it—why—you may. All right. Good-bye—Er—to-morrow at twelve-thirty—Yes—Good-bye.

Hello! Hello, Central, give me Woodhill 0600—Yes.—No—No—Wood-hill—W-o-o-d hill! Are you hard of hearing? Hello, is this you, Maud?

What? It's the Institute for the Feeble Minded—Gracious! Operator! Central! somebody! Why, these wires are crossed. What did you say? Eventually the Home for the Feeble Minded, why not now? Who are you, butting in like that? Certainly not a gentleman.

Central! Central! I want Woodhill 0600—No--no—O—0600. What you owe too? Will you get off the wire?

Central! Operator! Woodhill—Oh, Maud, is that you? Such a time as I've had to get you.

Thought I'd call you up. How are you? Promised I'd let you know about our Advanced Poetry Club—on Wednesday evening. It certainly was so very advanced,—oh, my dear—we met at the North End Club House. That poet Viking Regenstien read his wonderful excerpts

OVER THE 'PHONE WIRES

of Free Verse on "The Dead Cat in our Alley," "The Apotheosis of the Garbage Man," "The Slimy Pool in the Deep Wood," "The Red Red Woman in the Purple Gown," "The Clogging Sewer," and other vivid and weird things, my dear. At last we have discovered the true poetry unknown to the commonplace soul that has struggled for light through the medium of rhyme, down years ago. That's what he said, and it's true.

I was simply thrilled, Maud dear—for days after I walked on air. When I told that to John he said the air must have solidified considerably to hold me. I presume he was coarsely alluding to my weight.

John says he is going to form a "Lonesome Fathers' Club" that will meet at the homes of the various husbands while the wives are at their several clubs. John is positively silly sometimes. I do not believe the men realize all we do and the risks we take, Maud.

Did you hear about Ruth Richly? You know that pretty débutante—G. E. T. Richly's daughter? Well, she came very near being injured by a very common person last week.

You know, Maud, that Miss Richly is an active member of the Calories Health Club and in the interest of the club and humanity, made several calls in the slum district, going back and forth in her limousine. When she attempted to explain the science of correct living upon sixteen cents a day to a woman with nine children, she

was shown the door, pushed out in fact, and the woman's vulgar, ill-bred offspring threw mud on her machine. Can you imagine such a thing? No wonder such people are always poverty-stricken and beyond redemption. They are very ungrateful creatures, don't you think?

I almost forgot, Miss Scribber, of the "Daily Whirl," is going to run my picture next week. She just insisted. I really dislike the notoriety, my dear—but what can one do? It comes with Club work.

Come over Thursday and play bridge—just a little party of four, honey—luncheon at one—yes. I hope the party who is listening on the line will be edified. It's that man, Maud. He said he was asphyxiated, the insolent puppy. Get off the wire, please, immediately!

Maud, are you going to the Club Business Meeting Tuesday? It is always a scream. Two or three fight and run everything and the rest sit back and get mad afterwards, because they didn't like the way things went. I hope they won't put up Mrs. Dodger again. Sometimes she knows you and sometimes she doesn't. It's shrieking, positively.

Who called "Time"? This isn't a prize fight—Oh, let the old crank have the wire. I bet he beats his wife. What?—Why, did you hear him? He said he'd shoot her if she was like me—the old bear.

Well, bye bye, Maud, come over—Come over Thursday. Yes, and don't forget the Club—

OVER THE 'PHONE WIRES

Tuesday—The election, yes—Did you hear the rude man? He said, “Just before the battle, mother.” Isn’t he horrible? Bye, bye, Maud.

That man said “The third time and out”—you rude monster—Good-bye, Maud dear,—Good-bye.

JEZEBEL

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

JEZEBEL, *the Queen-Mother.*

JEHONADAB, *an imaginary character, one of the body guard who has joined the forces of Jehu the conqueror.*

SCENE.—*An upper chamber in the palace of JEZEBEL, the Queen-Mother, widow of Ahab, former king of Israel.*

TIME.—*About 886 B. C.*

(*JEHU the conqueror has just entered. JEZREEL after slaying JORAM, the king, in the plains beyond. He demands the death of JEZEBEL, the wicked Queen-Mother. She has defied him from the window of her palace. JEHONADAB enters the upper chamber and speaks to her.*)

JEHONADAB *speaks.*

Jezebel, thou sorceress, turn from the window with thy painted eyelids and glittering raiment. Thinkest thou to dazzle great Jehu with thy royal raiment? I, Jehonadab, one of his body guard who joined his forces, enter thy presence unabashed, thou Tyrian woman, Queen-Mother in the court of thy son, Joram. When thou didst appear at the casement to call to Jehu,

JEZEBEL

who rides in his chariot in triumph through the streets below, didst thou think to affright him with thy threats?

Dost thou know that Joram, thy son, who was but a plaything in thy hands, lies pierced to the heart by Jehu's arrow in the plain beyond the walls?

Thine hour has come, oh murderess; too long have the people felt thy heavy hand. All Israel hath been scattered as sheep without a shepherd by thy wickedness in the sight of the Lord. Thine ears were closed to the warnings of the prophet Elijah, who fled to escape the vials of thy wrath and was fed by Moses in the wilderness.

From the tower the watchmen beheld Jehu and his company and thy son, Joram, rode to meet him, crying, "Is it Peace?" And Jehu hurled back to him, "Sayest thou Peace with the iniquities of thy wicked mother, Jezebel, abroad in the land?" and he forthwith sped an arrow to the heart of Joram.

Thy son is no more, Jezebel, called Queen-Mother, and a worse fate awaits thee. Soon will they blow the trumpets, crying, "Jehu is King."

Take thy last look at the riches about thee, the hangings of purple dyed in thy native Tyre, the leopard and lion skins upon thy couch. On thee, Ahab, the king, thy husband, showered the gold and pearls of the east, the linens of Egypt, the ivories of Arabia. About thee are vases of

MOSTLY COMICS

pottery, urns of copper and brass; incense wafts from vessels of silver; rare wines fill thy golden cups, full to overflowing—wines from the goodly vineyard of the slain husbandman.

Aye, shudder if thou canst for the blood of Naboth and of his sons fills thy wine cups. From thy casement thou couldst view the peaceful vineyard of Naboth and this, Ahab, thy husband, did covet. What saidst thou to thy husband who was too weak to follow his desires and thine? “Let thine heart be merry. I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth,” and straightway didst thou send forth letters sealed with the king’s seal, seizing the vineyard and causing Naboth and his sons to be stoned to death by thy vile emissaries to satisfy thy base desire.

Yet for the blood thou hast spilled shall thy blood be spilled in return. Knowest thou who am I—Jehonadab, who stand before thee? Naboth was mine uncle and ’tis I who will avenge him.

Thy iron rule is at an end. Since Ahab, thy husband, the King, was gathered to his fathers, all Israel hath been shamed. Altars have arisen to Baal the false god. His prophets of the sun and prophets of the moon sit at thy table. Call upon the false god, Baal, to save thee. Jehu demands thy death and I, Jehonadab, have asked this boon of him that I myself may follow his commands, and avenge, too, the death of mine uncle according to my vow.

Call not thy eunuchs; they are in bondage.

JEZEBEL

Thou didst paint thine eyelids and tire thy head to call threats unto Jehu, the son of Nimshi, who hath driven furiously and awaits below. Go to thy death in full glory with the raiment thou hast worshipped even as thou hast Baal, the false one. See, I wrap thy glittering chains about thy neck.

What says prophecy? Thy blood shall flow in the streets and the dogs shall eat thee. Nay, thou canst not escape my embrace. I seize thee in my arms. (*Looks out as though looking out of a window into the street below and calls.*) "What ho! Ye in the street below! To thee great Jehu I throw this woman that she be trampled beneath thy horses' hoofs. (*Makes a move as though struggling, and then throwing a weight from the window to the street. Speaks excitedly, looking down.*) The multitude shouts as one man. They are trampling her, grinding her beneath the chariot wheels. Beyond await the dogs with dripping mouths, clamoring for the feast.

(*Lifts his arms.*) 'Thus is prophecy fulfilled.

"In the portion of Jezreel shall the dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." Naboth, mine uncle, thou art avenged!

“IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE”

THE ROMANCE OF AN “AD”

The handsome young man in the collar ad,
Gazed across at the red-haired maid,
Washing clothes with the flaky soap
Guaranteed never to fade.

What a wonderful wife she would make, he
thought,
Always so charming and neat.
So he tried very hard to make her look up,
She was so dainty and sweet.

Yet across the car with never a look
She seemed busily washing the clothes,
The more modest she, the more anxious he,
To find the words to propose.

When all of a sudden alas! came a day,
There appeared an “ad” for mince pie
With a merry young miss holding out a big
slice,
And looking him straight in the eye.

Forthwith he forgot the girl and the soap,
The miss and the pie looked so good,
For with men in an “ad” and with men in
real life
The way to the heart is just—*food*.

ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARES

“You’d tink dey costed about ten cents apiece,” mused Red Charley, watching the stream of automobiles as he crossed the Michigan Avenue bridge. Ordinarily, he would have walked across the bridge without glancing at the river which he only heeded when an open draw and passing steamer awakened a lazy interest; but to-day he hesitated and then stopped quite still, and leaned against the railing. A woman stood gazing intently out over the river toward the setting sun and on the hand that grasped the railing scintillated a diamond of rare brilliance, at least to Red.

“Gee, dat’s some sparkler,” thought Red Charley, his hunting instinct aroused. So the ferret scents the rat or the hound the fox. This was his quarry. She was a young woman, and a most attractive one with a slender girlish figure in a trim jacket and skirt, a gray fur scarf, and wearing a small modish hat.

“Wot’s de dame lampin’ in dat dirty stream for?” mused Charley again. “’Tain’t no oil paintin’.”

It was a bit picturesque for all of Red’s scorn. The soft sunset glow turned the water to a shimmering pink and the warehouses loomed like gray, ghostly castles in the western haze. A tug went chugging up stream. A barge laden

MOSTLY COMICS

with stone was tied to the dock. Over on the bridges to the west miniature people and trolley cars hurried along, dwarfed by the distance. By and by the twinkling lights began to come up and the electric signs to flash out their call to the morrow's marts of trade. The girl seemed to rouse herself as if from a dream and started north. Red Charley waited, keeping her in sight, for he was too well known to the police to be careless. She went down the stairway, turned east in Grand Avenue and turned over to Ohio Street, going toward the great lake, walking rapidly. When she came nearer to the shore, she started north again. Charley quickened his pace. He was not sure what he would do. He did not wish to hurt the girl but he wanted the ring. She stopped not seeming to hear him and it was now quite dark so that he could keep out of sight. The walk had been a long one but she had gone at such a brisk pace that Charley had kept upon first speed in order to follow her. He was quite close now and he saw her step for a moment into a faint streak of light that came from a distant street lamp, open her bag and take out a small revolver. For a moment Red Charley thought she had seen him and was about to protect herself. Then he realized that she intended to take her own life. Quick as a flash, he seized her arm and wrenched the revolver from it. Involuntarily, she put up her other arm, clutching his hand as if to shield herself.

ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARES

“Wot’s de great idea? Dis ain’t no movin’ pitcher,” he said, pulling her into the shadow, for Red was ever on the alert for a “cop.”

She did not scream. Sometimes the soul is so deadened with pain that no shock can awaken it.

“Why did you do that?” she said dully, as though she had known the burglar all her life. “Now I must go on living—on and on and on.”

Then Red Charley became conscious of an amazing thing. In the struggle, the diamond ring had come off in his hand—the ring he had coveted and the woman was too dazed to know it. He could cut and run now, but he didn’t.

“Kill me and I will not have to kill myself,” she said in the tone of one who had no hope.

“Wot th’ hell! Excuse me, loidy, I am a tough piece o’ cheese, but I ain’t never croaked nobody yet,” he said. “Wot’s got holt of you, dat you wants to pass in your checks so sudden?”

A piece of piling had been thrown upon the shore. She sat down upon it and began to weep uncontrollably. Red Charley stood awkwardly in front of her for a moment and then he sat down beside her. Misery draws strange companions together.

“You ain’t in my class, loidy, but if you kin git dis load off your chest by spillin’ it to me, why, shoot. My hearin’s first rate.”

That was the trouble with Charles of the red hair surnamed Red, burglar, crook and man

MOSTLY COMICS

about town. He had a soft heart that had landed him behind the bars more than once.

"You are very kind," she moaned. "No one can help me. It is too late."

She did not seem to think it strange that he was there beside her. When the ship is sinking and the soul faces eternity, the "wherefores" of daily conventional life mean nothing.

"Nuttin's ever too late, loidy. Why I've set in jail—I mean," he corrected hastily, "I've saw men in de cooler wot tought dey was in for life, putty near an' dey're hoofin' it around dis little old burg to-day. Don't never give up 'til dey nails down de coffin lid. Sometimes things comes unexpected," he added, thinking of the ring.

"I've nobody left—not one," she cried out into the darkness, bearing her soul to the spirits of the night, with the spoken words, so long pent within. Something held the burglar there almost against his will.

"Wherein have I failed, oh God?"

"You don't look like de Salvation Army, ma'am, but you sure talks like one of them soul snatchers. Go on if it makes you feel easier inside," Red Charley put in.

She had no sense of fear, of time, or of place. It was as though she had passed beyond the pale of earth and stood at the judgment seat of the Infinite, pleading her cause. Mechanically, she told her story, scarcely conscious of her listener,

ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARES

beginning as though they had spoken of it all before.

“I’ve pretended and pretended with my friends and now my money is gone. I don’t know what to do. My husband and I quarreled and I left him in a fit of anger and then I wouldn’t make up, and he went away. I returned all of his letters. It was his best friend who employed me, but that best friend was a traitor to us both, and when I wouldn’t listen to him he said there was some cash missing and dismissed me. No matter where I went his vengeance followed me until I am tired of it all. I can no longer stand the strain. A friend invited me to stay with her, but I paid until I lost my position. The salary was so small it hardly kept me, and my friend’s husband grew tired of my being there. It was a week ago I heard him say when I went to my room, ‘Our expenses are too heavy—I don’t see why I have to be burdened with your friend. Why don’t she go to work? We don’t need her help here, in this little bandbox and two’s company and three’s a crowd in any house.’

“It was not meant for my ears but I heard and it rang all day in my heart like a death knell. I did not wait to hear what she replied. I did not want to hear and I would not be a bone of contention between them. I only knew I was not wanted and I tramped all day trying to find something to do. There were plenty of places but I was unskilled and there seemed to

be no groove into which I could find a place. I had never known what it meant to battle with the world. Then I found a place and they dismissed me to-day. I knew the vengeance was following again, that it would follow me until I was broken or beaten. There was only one way out of it all—the coward's way, perhaps, I do not know. I did love my husband, and now it is too late to let him know. Love, love is such a wonderful thing—I am sorry for the souls that hunger for it and hunger in vain."

Red Charley had a sort of choking feeling in his throat. He fumbled at the ring in his pocket.

"Gee, he done you dirt, dat man you was hooked up to, and dat man what was pretendin' to be his friend. I'd fix dat boid if I had him here, de filthy skunk," he said, forgetting that she was a "loidy." She was only a soul in misery and had made an appeal to the kinder side of the soul of the crook. "But, say, don't git to figurin' no more on no gun play. Why, you allus had plenty of clothes and had enough to eat so far in your life, see? Down where I growed up, most of 'em is froze in winter an' gaspin' fer air in summer, and one good square feed a day would make 'em tink dey was makin' dat buzz-wagon Ford sore. I growed up in de gutter. Everybody kicked me. It seemed to git deir goat dat I was breathin' out of de same atmosphere. But here I am. Buck up, see? Don't be a quitter. Maybe dat man of yourn

ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARES

will git some twinges in dat space where his heart orter be, see? And come back. Anyways you will sure get a job if you wait, see? Buck up, loidy."

The girl rose slowly. "I'm going back and try to find a way out," she said. "I have been a coward. I don't know who you are but you've made me believe in God again. I almost doubted that there was a God."

Red Charley fingered the diamond ring once more. Then he suddenly drew it from his pocket and pushed it into her hand. "You dropped dis, miss; you kin hock dat or sell it for somethin'." She took it mechanically. "I wanted to keep that. He gave it to me—my husband, when he asked me to be his wife. It is all I have left," and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"He'll be comin' back, loidy. Don't turn on de weeps. Ain't no boid livin's worth spillin' out yer soul fer. Grab holt on to life again, miss. Dat's what I'm tellin' you."

She seized his hand impulsively and pressed it to her cheek. "Oh, how kind you are! I will—I will try—won't you tell me your name?"

"I ain't got much of a name, loidy, just don't you mind me. I see a bull—I mean a cop—in de next block. Chase along, he might get nosey about me an' you, see?"

"God bless you," she said, "I'll begin all over again." And she slipped away into the night.

Red Charley stood like one in a trance.

“Wot th’ hell! Dat dame squeezed me hands like I was somebody. She’s a fine dame all right, but she’s sure bugs too, else she wouldn’t say I’d made her believe in God, me a boigler. I’ve gone bugs, too, handin’ over de sparkler wot come so easy. But her own folks give her de dirty mitt and it was up to me to make good. Tink of Red Charley handin’ out de comfort dope like a reg’lar little soul snatcher, and handin’ back de sparkler. I’m sure a bunch of squirrel food, and I’d better get my bean examined, fallin’ for a weepy skirt like dat.”

And Charles the Red sauntered back to Clark Street, pawned the revolver, and went into a Greek all-night joint for a bite of supper.

THE AWAKENING¹

CHARACTERS IMPERSONATED

THE WOMAN.

SELF.

TRUTH.

BEAUTY.

VIBRATION.

SCENE.—*The room of THE WOMAN.*

(The scene is a small room in great disorder, clothing thrown about the floor. On a table, books, bits of food, soiled dishes and small alcohol stove used for cooking purposes. An unmade bed adds to the general air of discomfort and untidiness.)

THE WOMAN enters, wearing outer garments and moving in a slow dispirited way. She takes off her hat and coat and throws them upon the bed. Looks about her in a discouraged way; drops into a chair and assumes an attitude of despair.)

(Enter SELF: a cynical woman dressed carelessly.)

SELF. Well,—so you at last believe me! Life is scarcely worth the while! (WOMAN

[¹ NOTE: Written for and dedicated to The Tucker School of Expression.]

MOSTLY COMICS

shakes head sadly.) The World is a dreary place where man preys upon his neighbor. The rich strut about in jewels and fine raiment; the poor starve and slave. Beyond your tiny room are stately halls, where wealth and gayety abound—you—you have naught.

WOMAN. Nay, I have naught—naught but misery.

SELF. You are cold and hungry and unloved. (THE WOMAN *shivers*. SELF *comes closer*.) Why not end it all!

WOMAN (*starting up*). Who are you that tempts me thus?

SELF. You should know me. I am your inner self. Look about you—is the struggle worth while? There is no future. All is dark.

WOMAN (*sinking into a chair and burying her face in her hands*). I will end it all. I can bear no more.

(*The door opens and TRUTH, a woman in Grecian draperies, enters. SELF starts to slink away. THE WOMAN lifts her head. TRUTH points a finger at SELF who slinks toward a corner as if afraid.*)

WOMAN (*slowly*). You—Who are you?

TRUTH. I am Truth. I have come to aid you. Lift up your head.

(SELF *makes a movement toward WOMAN.*)

WOMAN. I cannot!

TRUTH (*in a tone of command*). Lift up

THE AWAKENING

your head! (*Looks at SELF who drops back. The WOMAN slowly rises and comes forward.*) Lift—lift—up—up—to the full length of your being. (*The WOMAN stands straight.*) Up—up toward heaven from whence comes the light! (*The WOMAN lifts her whole body. TRUTH throws open the window.*) Behold, I have let in the light. Gaze about you.

(*The WOMAN gazes about her.*)

WOMAN (*in amazement*). Why, all is disorder! (*Begins to pick up the clothing.*) Has it been always thus? (*Straightens the books, etc.*)

TRUTH. Breathe the fullness of life.

WOMAN. The air is sweet—it was stifling! I want to live! Here in my little room life is worth while. (*SELF draws nearer as if to dominate WOMAN. WOMAN pauses.*) And yet I love beauty; none is here. My world is so small!

(*Enter BEAUTY.*)

BEAUTY. Your world is all the world!

WOMAN. And you—Who are you?

BEAUTY. I am the curving line of Beauty. Come with me. (*Leads WOMAN to the window. They look out.*) Your world is there—where beckon the waving branches of the trees—where glows the blue of spreading sky—where gleam the snowy cloudlets. Behold the curving limbs of childhood—the graceful sweep of birds upon the wing—the flowers dropped from Paradise!

MOSTLY COMICS

WOMAN. Oh, how beautiful! I have never seen these things before; and these are mine! I am rich! I will not be sad again! (*SELF creeps nearer in effort to hold WOMAN.*)

WOMAN (*growing grave*). But, I alone am unlovely. I have neither form nor comeliness!!

BEAUTY (*holds up mirror to the WOMAN and SELF slinks away*). The round cheek, the bright eye, the graceful neck—all these are your gifts. You are wonderfully made. Would you destroy God's handiwork with the thoughts of Self?

WOMAN (*gazing in mirror*). Oh, I, too, am beautiful! My hope is renewed. I am alive and in a wondrous world! (*SELF slinks away.*)

(*Enter VIBRATION.*)

VIBRATION. You have but opened your eyes like a new born babe unto the light.

WOMAN. Who are you?

VIBRATION. I am Vibration. You shall not stop at Self-Knowledge for thus would you stagnate. Go forth to help others! Vibrate—with the glory of the awakened Soul within you!

(*SELF sinks in heap on floor.*)

WOMAN (*holding out her arms*). I have found my Soul and I will carry the message to other souls crying for light, even unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

CURTAIN

AN UP-TO-THE MINUTE JINGLE

We woke up the other morning,
And found a dreadful plight.
The snow had fallen steadily,
All day and half the night.

We could not get about at all,
No use to growl and grovel;
The only sort of remedy
Was just to—up and shovel.

Now that is how it is in life,
You can't sit down and say,
“The world's all wrong,” and fold your
hands.
Get your shovel—make a way.

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

Malvina Harris took off the "gown" she wore when at work, changed her shoes, donned a black skirt, a white shirt waist, and a warm, if somewhat worn plush coat, packed her things into a "soup case," as she called her Japanese matting valise, put on her hat (a man's white straw) and sallied forth toward the Forty-third Street car line. She boarded a Stock Yards Car, transferred and went to her little cottage on Wentworth Avenue. This was the regular routine of Malvina's day, six days out of seven, and she made a fairly comfortable living, washing, ironing and cleaning, at three dollars and ten cents per day. Down in her soul, Malvina was an aristocrat, the child of a slave in an old Kentucky family and herself a slave in her early childhood days. Now, while, during the carpet-bagging period that followed the civil war, the word "slave" had had an opprobrious sound, to-day, in Malvina's mind it separated the negro of class from those she designated as "Po' white black trash," or "half strainer," as the mood suited her.

She had attained an age when she spoke her own mind freely and walked into snobs of her color rough shod. The soul of honor, Malvina would have guarded the property of those she loved with her life, and the spirit of the mistress of that old Southern mansion had fallen as

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

a garment upon the girl with the black skin, who had grown up amongst the fine old trees and stretches of blue grass, in that far-away South-land.

Malvina unlocked the door of the little cottage and was about to enter when some one called her.

“ Oh, Miss Malviny! ”

A colored man wearing a soft felt hat, tan shoes with gray tops and a coat with a near fur collar, lifted his hat somewhat timidly, as Malvina squared around in a rather belligerent fashion.

“ Well! What you come messin’ roun’ heah fo’ again? ”

“ Nuthin’, Miss Malviny—nuthin’—only I is so glad to see you.”

“ Dat’s more’n I is you. Go on ’bout yo’ business, ef you has any.”

“ None at present ’ceptin’ to call on you.”

“ Which ain’t no business ’tall, kase you is gwine to hoof it immejut, Moss Johnson.”

The new overcoat then held no lure. It was all in vain that he had had his light felt hat cleaned.

“ You has sech a ’tractive home, Miss Malviny, ain’t you gwine to ’vite me in? ”

“ ’Vite nothin’, ” then suddenly, “ Fo’ Gawd’s sake, man, what you done with yo’ haid? ”

Moss placed a protecting hand over his head as though he feared she would pull the hair out by the roots.

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“Why I—I—I have jes’ been havin’ the kinks took out,” he stammered. “Does you like it?”

“Like it? You looks mo’ like a fool than evah. Been messin’ roun’ them crazy barber shops whar they tries to make fokes more’n they is, takin’ the kinks outer beards an’ makin’ heads of hair straight. They’d oughter take the kinks outer yo’ haid. Nex’ time you’ll be tryin’ to git yo’ skin white—peelin’ it or some-thin’.”

“No, no, Miss Malviny, not so long as you is a pretty brown liken you am. May I come in?”

However hard-hearted a woman may be, such devotion is melting and Malvina unlocked the door. Moss picked up her “soup-case” and followed into the neat little house. The stove was shiny, the bed quilt spotless, and the furniture orderly. A few plants at the windows between the white curtains bore the evidence of loving care. Malvina changed her dress in the kitchen, and donned her cover-all apron, hanging her street suit behind a curtained space, which held an assortment of gowns of various sizes, given to her by different employers, gowns, many of them too small for her ample figure, for Malvina accepted anything that was given to her of any size, whatsoever, and never by any chance, gave it away again. She had a collection of shoes that would have done for a débutante. One small white satin pair she treasured with a love amounting to adoration. They

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

had belonged to her young mistress and were kept carefully wrapped in tissue paper in a dresser drawer.

“ Well, I is gwine to git a meal for mahse’f. I suppose you is got to be fed too,” she said ungraciously.

Moss drew a parcel from his pocket.

“ Miss Malviny, I brung poke chops,” he said, with adoring emphasis.

“ Humph! You must have had a riz in yo’ sal’ry. Poke chops is high.”

“ That’s why I brung ’em. I wouldn’t offer you nothin’ cheap ”—and he held out the parcel as though offering a sacrificial gift to a goddess.

Malvina received the meat, indifferently, while Moss removed his overcoat and inside coat, apologizing for doing so and stirred up the fire in the stove.

“ Yo’ sho had yo’ nerve, Moss Johnson,” said his inamorata, taking down the frying pan, “ bringin’ dis heah meat; how yo’ know I gwine to let you come in? ”

“ Miss Malviny, I made up my min’ to hang roun’ untell you did. It’s the stickinist paper what ketches the flies.”

“ You’ll fin’ I ain’t no fly—I’s mo’ like a wasp and you is gwine to git stung ef you don’ watch out.”

“ You is too sweet to string nobody,” gushed Moss, trying to take her hand.

“ You’ll git burnt wid hot grease in a second

MOSTLY COMICS

and you jes' cut out dat molasses talk, or I'll bust yo' wide haid open wid dis fryin' pan."

"Miss Malviny, I—I worships you, won't you marry me?"

"Marry you? No! I tole you no, a dozen times. Twict I has committed matermony and I done drawed a blank each time, so now I wuks for mahse'f an' don' have no man a hoggin' up mah earnin's."

"But I wants to wuk for yo', Miss Malviny. I has bought a lil restyrant, you know, an'——"

"Yes, an' yo' wants a cook. I has yo' sized up. Nothin' doin', man."

"I swears on de bible, I jes' wants yo'—yo' is alone—yo' son is married,—and I loves yo'."

Malvina had set the table for two.

"Come on an' eat an' stop yo' foolin'," she said bluntly, putting the meat in front of him.

"Here's some bread an' fried taters and some rice puddin'."

Moss smacked his lips.

"The reg'lar kin' with raisins an' hard sauce," he said—"mm—mm—Malviny, set down, an' let's perten' we am married."

"Yo' ole fool! Let's perten' we got some sense, even ef we ain't."

"I s'pose I ain't restocratic nuff fo' yo'. Miss Grant, she say ——"

Malvina squared round and when Malvina squared round, there was always fire in her eye.

"Don' 'peat nothin' to me what dat snob say. She come roun' heah tryin' paterumnize me,

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

tellin' 'bout her lectum lights an' marbleize bowls an' lavumtories in her flat. Why she ain't nothin'—that woman ain't. She ain't nothin'—nothin', I tell yo'. Nevah was nothin' neithah. Dem po' white thrash niggers whut nevah had nothin' comes up heah from the souf, makes a lil money an' den puts on mo' airs 'an a peacock, tryin' lord it ovah us fokes what was allus usen to quality."

Moss began to grow nervous, even with the delectable meal before him, cooked in Malvina's inimitable way.

"There, there, Miss Malviny, don' git so oncited. Ev'body knows you is qual'ty. Won't you 'sider mah application fo' membership in yo' fambly as a husban'?"

Malvina took another pork chop.

"Husban' nothin', such a pusson don' recomen' hisse'f to me. I is smoked an' cured of husbands, an' den I has my life wuk."

"It am Christmas, Miss Malviny, an' I thought maybe yo'd like me fo' to offer myse'f fo' a Christmas gif'."

"Christmas gif'! Gawd save us! You is mo' like a April Fool present."

"These fried potaters is sho' appetitious, Miss Malviny," Moss paused a moment, with his fork in the air. "Yo' spoke of yo' life wuk, is yo'—er—is yo' meanin' yo' life wuk am de lil white gal?"

"Nevah min' my meanin', I knows it."

"Well, Miss Watkins, Miss Vi'let Watkins—

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she wat am the sistah to the preachah of de Ephraim Baptis' Chu'ch, she say ——" he hesitated.

Malvina eyed him narrowly.

"Have some rice puddin', Mr. Johnson. Miss Watkins, she say what?"

Moss took some pudding to fortify himself and continued.

"Miss Watkins she say it am queeah, 'bout dat lil white gal, an' how you is her garjeen."

"Well, yo' jes' tell Miss Watkins dat she oughtah go to de Baptis' chu'ch ev'y day an' wash out her mouf. She am a gossip an' yo' tell her ef I ketch her talkin' 'bout me an' my lamb, I'll jes' natchully kill her."

"Yes'm, Miss Malviny. I'll tell her."

Malvina rose.

"An' now, Mr. Johnson, yo' has done et yo' poke chop, yo' kin jes' clar out."

"Miss—Miss Malviny, can't I set a while?"

"What is yo'—a ole hen?"

"Miss Malviny, can't I take yo' to a movie show?"

"No, I has a movie show of my own cleanin' up. Yo' go on alone."

Sadly Moss donned his coat and overcoat with a sigh and took himself and his newly straightened head of hair out of the house, toward the bright lights of State Street. He boarded a cross town car, and soon found himself walking amongst the élite of Chicago's colored population. Electric signs began to twinkle in front

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of the various cafés and stores. Groups of people gathered on the corners. In spite of the nearing holiday season, the weather was mild, as Chicago is a lady of moods and whims. Young colored swains chatted with chocolate-hued maidens as they strolled along. Jazz music rang out from the confectionery stores. The soda fountains were busy centers of interest and long lines of people stood in front of the movie theatres, waiting to gaze upon some favorite of the screen. Moss stopped in front of a window displaying brilliant ties and gay sport shirts, and sighed. Maybe if his tie had been more vivid, it would have kindled Malviny's interest anew in the male sex.

"How is yo', Mr. Johnson?" said a voice at his elbow.

"Oh, Miss Watkins, thank yo', I is tollable," said Moss lifting his hat.

"Yo' don't look even peart. Has Malviny fired yo' again?"

"She sort of did. But, Miss Watkins, yo' better not go up to Malviny's. She's 'bout as fond of yo' as a hoss am of a rattlesnake—not meanin' yo's no snake—it's jes' a 'parison."

"'Parisons is ojious."

"Dey sho' is, but Miss Malviny, she say ef you talk any mo' 'bout her an' her lil white gal, she natchally gwine to 'nihilate yo'. So this am a warnin'."

Miss Violet Watkins tossed her head. She was most fetchingly attired in a beaded gown, a

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marmot fur coat and the popular low shoes and silk stockings.

“I ain’t skeered of her a lil bit. De whole chu’ch am talkin’ about her for dat mattah. How come dat lil white chile am quality when she ain’t got no fokes? An’ how come dey done let Malviny brung her up? But ne’r min’ dat ole Malviny Harris. She am too ole fur a fine lookin’ man like yo’ is. Is yo’ walkin’ souf or norf, Mr. Johnson?”

Mr. Johnson, flattered at the tribute to his youth and good looks, was walking toward Thirty-fifth Street, and thereupon escorted Miss Violet to a movie show, so that disposes of them for the time being.

Malvina washed up her dishes, after the departure of Moss, and settled herself in a chair. She seemed to be in a deep reverie, and presently arose and went to the drawer of her dresser, taking out a bundle of what appeared to be letters, or photographs and something wrapped in tissue paper, seating herself again. It was some time before she unrolled the tissue paper, disclosing a pair of dainty satin slippers. She ran her hands into the slippers holding them out at arm’s length.

“Lil Missy! Lil Missy! Po’ lil Missy,” she murmured, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. “Yo’ usen to dance about in dese slippahs like a lil fairy, an’ now yo’ is gone!”

After a time, she rolled up the slippers reverently, and opened the bundle of photographs.

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There was a picture of a pretty woman in white, in the full sleeves and train of the eighties, and several pictures of a child in a white slip and socks;—then later one of the same child, now a young girl with a witching smile and a mop of curly hair.

She opened a letter and with difficulty spelled out the words.

“BLESSED MAMMY MALVINA:

School is closed for holidays. We closed three weeks earlier this year because of the illness of one of the Sisters. I am invited to the home of one of the girls for a week, but I will come to see you just the minute my visit is over. I am so happy, dear Mammy, for a special reason and I love you.

Your baby,

LOUVILLE.”

Malvina had a habit of talking to herself.

“She is gittin’ too ole, seventeen this year an’ this ain’t no fitten place for my baby,” she muttered, rising and putting her treasures carefully away. She took a bank book from the drawer and looked it over. “I has a lil money lef’ an’ I’se gwine to take her back home, an’ see what kin be done. Dat’s what I’ll do when wuk slackens up in a month or two, maybe—I kin wuk harder an’ make up the money agin.”

We say that “Man proposes and God dis-

MOSTLY COMICS

poses ” and at that we lay too much at the door of the Almighty. In a short time came Louville, beautiful and seventeen. She had been with Malvina since her babyhood, that is as far as the neighbors knew and Malvina kept her own counsel. She had come from Kentucky with the white child of five and her own boy of twelve. The boy had played with the neighbors, but the little white girl had been placed in a convent, and came to the cottage only for an occasional visit, although it was reported that Malvina saw her every week. The boy grew up, married and had gone to another town to live. So the years had slipped by, and here was Louville seventeen and beautiful.

“ Mammy Malviny,” she said, patting and kissing the black cheek, “ I am here and I am going to stay for a while, and you are not going to work or anything. We’ll have a Christmas tree this year and ride on the bus and shop and everything. So you can just rest. I do love you so much. The Sisters were nice and kind, but you are the only mother I have known. Tell me, dearest Mammy, about my mother—I mean all about her. I think I am old enough to know now.” And Louville sat down on Mammy’s lap.

Malvina hugged her white child.

“ Yes, some day, soon, yo’ is gwine to know. We’ll soon go ’way down to Kaintucky to the big white house near Louville—dat’s why I call yo’ Louville, kase I loves dat town and we’ll deman’ justice from dat uncle of yourn.”

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

“Oh, tell me about him, Mammy dear!”

Malvina shook her head, “Not quite yet, chile—not now, but you shall have justice, baby. We’ll go in ’bout two weeks, ef I can arrange it satisfacshum.”

“Two weeks. O Mammy, and I have a secret too—no, not yet—but I’ll tell you soon. Two weeks, Mammy, why that will be Christmas time.”

“Yes, baby, we’ll go fo’ Christmas. Sometimes the Lawd softs up fokes’ hearts roun’ Christmas time.”

Man proposes—eh? Poor finite man.

The brewing social storm that broke out at intervals swept certain districts now and again with more or less violence. The riots of some months before, with occasional bomb outbreaks, when the racial feeling grew to a climax that ended in death and lawlessness, had made Malvina uneasy regarding her child. She knew that there was an undercurrent of feeling against the girl and a curiosity as to her origin. The recent bombing of property purchased in a white neighborhood had fanned the flame anew. Malvina saw the trend of feeling toward her baby. She must take her away to the South. Only that day she had slapped Violet Watkins’ face when she had slurred at Louville while she was at the grocery making purchases. It was time to get away. She must take Louville South and plead with the girl’s uncle for fair play.

At nine o’clock the night before they went to

start there was a knock at the door and almost immediately Moss Johnson rushed in. "Miss Malviny, de mob am headed dis way. Hide dat white chile!"

Malvina slammed and locked the door and Louville rushed into her arms.

"Let 'em dare tetch me or mah chile," she shouted.

Moss started out the back way. "Miss Malviny, I has warned you. I'd like to stay, but I ain't a fightin' man."

"Go on, you coward, I is a fightin' woman," she shouted again and he was gone.

A rumbling of voices was heard, growing louder every minute, and a crash came against the door.

"Malvina Harris, open dat do'!" cried a loud voice.

"What you want?"

"You open dat do', or we'se gwine to bust it open."

"Go on an' bust. De lan'lord'll bust you."

There was a mighty crash and the door fell in. Malvina grabbed up a chair pushing Louville behind her.

"Stay outside! Stay outside! De fust one dat come past dat do' sill am gwine to git his haid laid open, an' his brains shook out. What you want, you po' trash?"

She stood facing the mob and even then they felt the power of her presence.

"We want dat white gal what puts on sech

THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE SOUL

airs. We'll teach her to live down heah whar we is an' act like we's de dirt undah her feets."

"No, no," cried Louville, "you are mistaken. I could not do that. I have never harmed any of you and I love Mammy Malvina."

A shot struck the wall behind Malvina. She was brave until it came to the girl.

"Why fur you want to kill dat chile? She ain't all white. She am mine. My own flesh and blood. I'm her real mothah."

Violet Watkins stepped to the front of the mob.

"Yo' is her mothah?" she cried.

"Yes, I is, and dis is yo' doin', Violet Watkins. Now git out all of you. 'Tain't nobody's business ef she had a white fathah."

Violet laughed mockingly. "A white fathah! An' this is the saint, the gran' chu'ch membah, Malviny Harris, what am too proud to 'sociate with common folks!"

Malvina rushed forward and the crowd fell back from the door. There was a policeman's whistle and the mob dispersed. Louville sank into a heap upon the floor. Malvina lifted the door and placed a chair against it. The girl crawled upon her knees and clasped the negro woman about her body.

"Mammy, Mammy Malvina, quick—quick, was it true? Am I your child? Am I a negress? Tell me, tell me you were lying! I shall die! I shall die!"

She dropped to the floor in a faint. Malvina

picked up the limp form in her strong arms. All her life she had been a mother to the girl and now that Louville thought that she was really her mother, she was unable to bear the horror of the situation.

Life was a strange thing. A matter of color, not heart. The girl's agony terrified her, and she gathered her baby in her arms.

"Mah baby! Mah baby! I was lyin' to save yo' life. You is white—I swear it." But Louville did not seem to hear.

A young man walked into the cottage from the rear door which Moss Johnson in his hasty flight had left open. He was a good-looking young man, in a dark suit and belted overcoat, with a soft felt hat on the back of his head.

"Who is yo'? Git out!" Malvina cried fiercely, holding Louville closer to her ample breast.

"I beg pardon," the young man said, "I am a reporter from the *Daily Mail* and have been getting a line on the riots." Then catching sight of the girl, he cried, "Louville, dearest Louville, what are you doing here?" and he tried to take her in his arms.

She sprang from him. "Don't—don't touch me! It can never be. I am tainted—I am black. You must go away," and she sank again upon the floor.

"Black—Louville—what nonsense? What does this mean? Why are you here? In this

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house—in danger? ” But she only moaned and he turned to Malvina.

“What is the meaning of this? What are you doing with this girl? ”

Malvina squared herself with folded arms.

“That’s what I axes you? She am mah baby. I done riz her up from a baby and you come claimin’ her. Whar you done met up with her? ”

Louville looked up. “He’s all right, Mammy,” she sobbed. “I met him when we had a fire—at the convent. He came to write about it. Then I saw him many times,—we—we were engaged—I—I meant to tell you—that was my secret—but now—now—it’s all over.”

The young man caught her up from the floor.

“No, no, Louville—I’ll find out the truth. Why do you keep this young lady here? ” And he looked sternly at the negress.

Malvina gazed at him in amazement.

“Why she am mah baby, I tells you, what I riz up an’ mothered and wuk fur—my chile.”

“There’s something very strange here. My name is George Dickinson—here’s my card. The girl is white. She is not your child. Where did the money come from for her education? I will find out the whole story and don’t you forget it. Louville, you can’t stay here—this is a dangerous place. You may be killed; I will take you to my mother.”

Louville shrank away from him. “But I can’t go, I’m black! I am black!”

“You are no more black than I am. I’ll sift this matter to the bottom,” and George put his arms about her.

The old negress caught his arm.

“How I know who you is? Maybe you is a kidnapper and will steal mah baby. Louville, baby, does you want to leave yo’ ole mammy?”

The girl looked from one to the other.

“Oh, I don’t know—I don’t know—I am afraid here, but I don’t know.”

The young reporter held her fast.

“You must come—you are not safe here a minute: I have a taxi outside at the rear,” and before Malvina realized it she stood alone in the little cottage—alone with her broken door propped up with a chair, alone with the broken heart that would not be healed.

Her baby gone, with scarcely a look back! After her years of devotion! She sat for hours as one in a daze and then she went to the drawer and brought forth the treasured bundles.

“Oh, mah lil missy, mah lil white missy! You with the fairy foots! I is glad you nevah live to see this day. I stood by mah trus’, honey. Honest to Gawd, I stood by mah trus’!”

Suddenly she sprang up and paced the floor.

“Maybe that white man was a sure nuff kidnapper.”

She had heard of such things. And she feverishly donned her hat and coat, and went to the convent several miles away. Sister Bea-

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trice was very patient and gentle even though roused at such a late hour, and listened carefully to Malvina's story. She telephoned to the address on the young man's card and was reassured by his mother that Louville was all right and was now sleeping and that she would have all the care possible. Then, although the kind-hearted Sister tried to urge Malvina to remain, she trudged back home with aching feet and a heavy heart.

The next day Sister Beatrice had another caller. An alert, up-to-date young man, with a brisk reportorial air. George Dickinson was a Northern man who had not the slightest conception of the negro mammy of the South and he listened in amazement to the story. So accustomed was he to scenes and tales of cupidity and selfishness as a reporter for a great daily, that he could scarcely believe what he heard—a story that had been sealed on mammy's lips for years and was only wrung from her now to exonerate her darling.

Malvina's little Missy had married a "Poor White" Mountaineer, handsome, but beneath her in caste, and had been disowned by her family. She had lived away from her people in the mountains, and when her husband was killed, had not long survived the shock. On her death bed, she had sent for Malvina, imploring her to care for the baby. The old homestead was in the hands of an elder brother, proud and unrelenting, who refused to see the

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child and Malvina had at last drifted to Chicago.

George Dickinson looked at Sister Beatrice.

"But she says she was educated here. Where did the money come from?"

The Sister shook her head.

"I do not know. Her bills were paid promptly. We made a moderate charge, as we loved the child and knew something, a little, of her history, but not all of it until last night.

"Mrs. Harris must have paid them from her own pocket. She came to find out about you last night."

The young man looked at her in astonishment.

"Came last night?"

"Yes, walked most of the way, I think; the cars do not run regularly out here so late."

"My God! Pardon me, Sister. I wondered how you knew where to find us. I'll go hunt up the old soul. I love the young lady and want her to marry me, but I guess the old woman had some right to know. Why, she claimed the girl was her own, just to save her from the mob. Thanks a thousand times, Sister, you're a pippin—I mean you're a brick and all the goods—Oh, well, I mean you're all right," and he rushed away.

The cottage was empty, the broken door nailed, but there was no response and George could not find any one who knew where Malvina had gone. He gathered up the news for the

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day's stories, boarded a car and went to the office. The Christmas spirit was in the air. At the busiest corner in the world, the crowds jostled one another good-naturedly. The red coat of the street Santa Claus gave holiday color and dimes and dollars dropped into the boxes for the poor.

At five o'clock George was sent to the North Side for a story, near his own home on Elm Street. A burglary had been committed on the Lake Shore Drive. George got his story and thought he would drop around to the house for a moment, but he dreaded to tell Louville of the unsuccessful quest for Malvina. He felt a little guilty toward his paper when he thought of what a wonderful scoop the whole story would be, but the reporter was lost in the lover, and he quieted his reportorial conscience.

The sky was heavenly blue. The lake—owing to the mild season, free from ice, tossed with gentle restlessness against the beach. The strip of parkway was full of people, enjoying the late season. A party of horseback riders cantered on the dirt roads. The stately homes upon the Lake Shore Drive seemed to frown disdainfully upon the "hoi polloi," but in the language of the vulgar small boy, "they should worry."

Suddenly George gazed in astonishment. Ahead of him trudged an ample figure in a worn plush coat, black skirt and a man's straw hat. It could not possibly be—but it was!

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“Er—Mrs. Harris—what are you doing here?”

She squared around, with a semblance of her old time ferocity.

“I axes you—what am you doin’ here—whar’s my baby?”

“You look tired ——”

“Nevah you min’—my foots is fallin’ off but I’s gwine to fin’ out for mahse’f ef you is keerin’ for dat chile right.”

Something choked a little in the young man’s throat. He had just been discharged from overseas service. He hadn’t lost his nerve over there, but somehow this old woman, footsore, deserted, yet adoring, got his heart strings to throbbing.

“You are coming right home with me, Mrs. Harris, and meet my mother. The little girl would not give me any peáce until I looked you up. I’ve been searching everywhere. She wanted to come, but I thought it wasn’t wise.”

Malvina caught his arm.

“Did my baby want me? Did she—oh, dat am worf all the walkin’! Gawd save us, man, mah foots is so’.”

And they met again, Louville and Malvina—rushing into each other’s arms!

“Oh, forgive me, my blessed Mammy! I didn’t mean to desert you. I was so afraid, but—you’ll never, never leave us again. When we get married you shall live with us forever and ever.”

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“Thank de Lawd, baby, I believes in Him an’ His Christmas. I done got mighty skeplicum when you went away but I axes Him ovah and ovah for a miracle an’ it come, baby, it come.”

Later there was a wonderful Christmas Eve. A light fall of snow gave the proper realistic touch. There was a tree too, a beautiful tree, such as Mammy had never seen, loaded with all manner of gifts for her use and comfort.

“Look like honey chile,” she said, with eyes shining, “look like ev’y day gwine to be Christmas for me ’till I die. Sho’s you is bawn, it do look dat away.”

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